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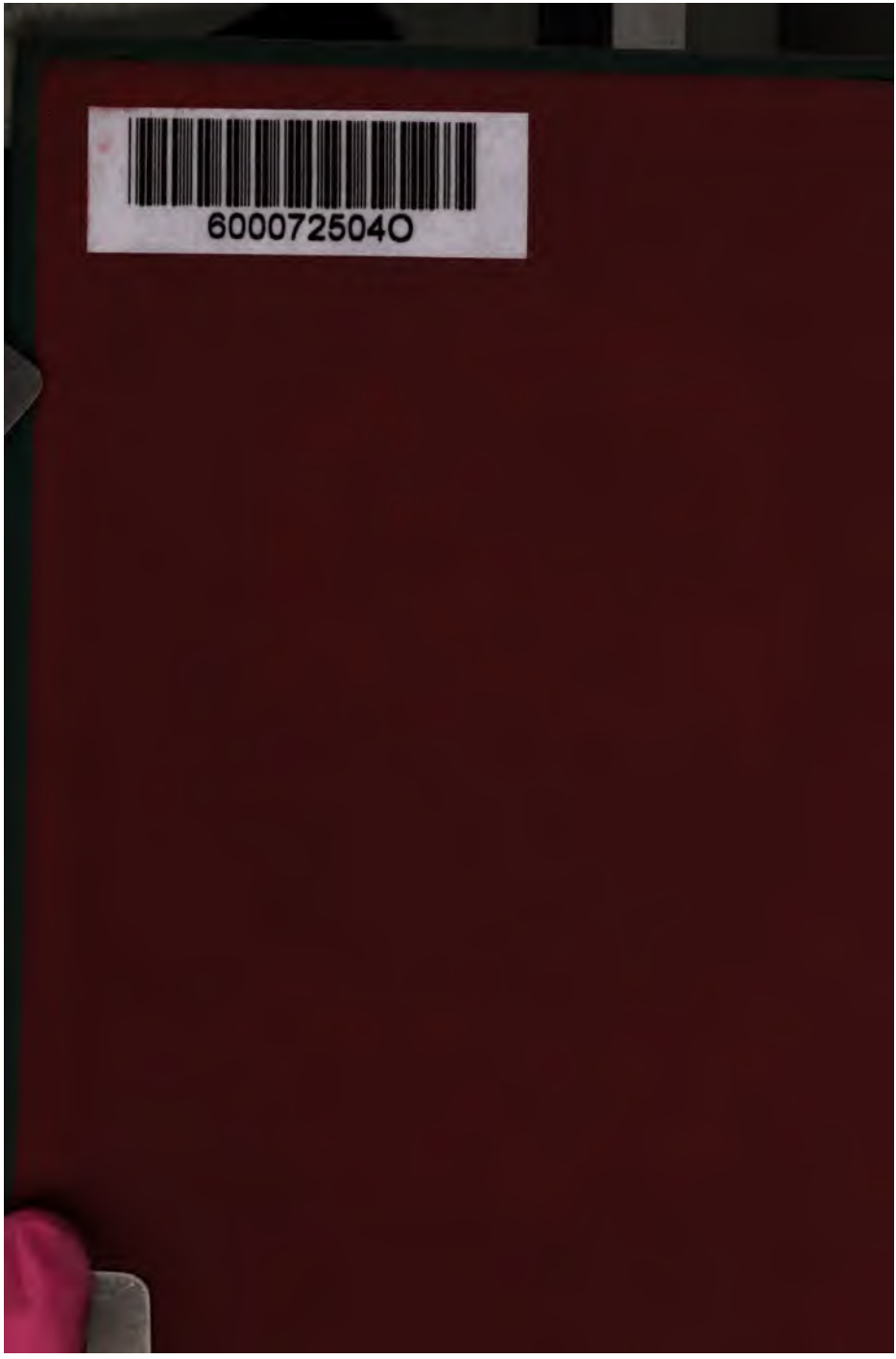
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LOST AND SAVED.

VOL. I.

LOST AND SAVED.

BY

THE HON. MRS. NORTON,

AUTHOR OF

"STUART OF DUNLEATH,"

&c.

MEPHISTOPHELES.—Sie iſt gerichtet!

CHORUS OF ANGELS.—Iſt gerettet!

She is lost!

Is saved!

GOETHE'S *Faust.*

Fourth Edition.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

HURST AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS,

SUCCESSORS TO HENRY COLBURN,

13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1863.

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TO

ARTHUR ALGERNON

EARL OF ESSEX.

DEAR LORD ESSEX,

In the old happy days when your girl and my boy rode laughing races through the woods of Wiesbaden, and you and I took more cheerful walks than I can ever take again: when your beautiful and pleasant sisters were "new friends," and we all hoped to make but one family: I jested with you

as to your notions of charm and perfection in woman, and told you I would some day create a heroine on that model, and bring her to grief in a novel.

The real griefs and heavy anxieties of life have overshadowed both our homes since those days; and both those young voices are silent for ever, whose music we thought would linger with us, till we ourselves were insensible to earthly sounds.

From this cause,—and many other disturbing causes,—the work begun so long ago has only lately been brought to a conclusion. I still offer it to you; glad to feel that amid "all the chances and changes of this mortal life" our friendship at least remains unaltered. I present to you no faultless heroine in BEATRICE BROOKE; but I have the fullest confidence and foreknowledge

that you will love her better than the unexceptionable Mariana, or even sweet Helen Wollingham. And if the relation of her adventures should help to lighten some tedious day,—when you are suffering from what I should have termed the unendurable pain of tic-douloureux, if I had not witnessed the noble and patient courage with which you have always sustained it,—the volumes begun under such different auspices will still remain a pleasant memory to me.

In the hush of the library at Cassiobury, —full of rarer and more important works, which when borrowed are to be accounted for by written hostages left in the deserted shelf,—give my Beatrice a home, as near the sunny window as you can! And when she is missing from her nook, may the names only of "friendly readers,"—of the young, the kindly, and the enthusiastic,—be found

inscribed on the slips of paper which shall guard her vacant place; crowning, I hope, her frequent absence with her speedy and safe return.

And so, with all good wishes for the future, and affectionate memories of the past,

Believe me,

Yours most truly,

CAROLINE ELIZABETH SARAH NORTON.

THE HON. MRS. NORTON'S LETTER

TO

THE EDITOR OF *THE TIMES.*

Sir,—I hope you will allow me space for a few observations respecting the novel lately published under the title of *Lost and Saved.* I am not about to review my reviewers. The very varying and contradictory opinions given by critics, the conviction that, after all, the public who buy and read are the real reviewers, would prevent my attempting such rebellion, even if I did not hold the sincere belief that, unless an author be delirious with self-esteem, he may find a useful lesson in the sharpest and least candid attack, and something to be grateful for in the most moderate expression of favourable judgment.

I am quite willing to admit that it must be from defective narration that more than one reviewer has considered that my heroine lived by consent

with her lover after she became aware that she was not really married to him. But it is, perhaps, easier for a woman to understand the confusion that may exist in young and ignorant minds than for educated and intelligent men, to whom the law on these subjects seems clear; and I will venture to say, I could find a parallel to Beatrice's easy credence in fifty out of a hundred girls brought up in retirement. In Scotland, indeed, it is settled and established law that "if two persons, either in public or in private, acknowledge each other to be married persons, this will effectually constitute marriage without the priest's blessing, and without the presence of witnesses."

Beatrice, after Treherne's remorseful declarations, believes herself married. Her reproach to him (page 204 in the second volume) is couched in these words:—"I am your wife, Montagu, and this woman is another man's wife; I have the same right to resent treachery that her husband would have."

I notice the supposition that the characters are "drawn from real life." That is a very poor compliment to any author. It implies that he cannot create any personages graphically consistent enough to resemble nature. It is like telling an artist he has no knowledge of anatomical drawing, and can only copy a draped figure. If it were true that only a single example of a detestable person could be found, what mercy would that man or woman

deserve who, by universal and common consent, was held to be the sole type from which such word-pictures could be painted? But it is not true. A bad human being is not a *lusus naturæ*, and a good human being is not a phœnix. There are hundreds similar of both kinds, and the merit of the novelist consists in so well describing the *genus* that each circle of society may believe it there sees the particular example visible in its own orbit.

As to the general tenour and usefulness of purpose of *Lost and Saved*, it is objected that I have spoken out too plainly; and that, allowing that particular society calling itself "the world" to be what it is, no single voice can hope to amend the vicious injustice and general contempt of right and wrong which exist there. What may be done by a single protest is matter of opinion. The opinion of Dr. Johnson was, that no man ever achieved anything who did not greatly overrate his own power to influence others. I think that, so far from individual protests being worthless, they are the small hinges on which the great doors of change for ever turn.

No earnest writing or earnest striving in any cause is entirely without result; and a novel is as likely a mode as any other (a more likely mode with some minds) of waking attention to certain facts. It is complained that this is not a book for the very young. I did not write it for the very young; I should not give novels to the very young,

any more than I should teach my daughter French out of *Gil Blas*, though that was a general fashion in the last generation. I myself read no novels—saw no plays—nor ever attended the Opera till I was married. And to those who object to a story of the cruel vices of fashionable life, written with a moral purpose and an effort at warning, I must say that this last amusement struck me then with a surprise which no after familiarity has ever obliterated. The Opera is unquestionably the favourite amusement of the English aristocracy. Now, what are the plots of the principal operas?

The plot of *Don Giovanni* is so well known, that the name has passed into a byword for profligacy. In *Norma* two Druid priestesses are seduced. The elder priestess, with consummate hypocrisy, continues to head all sacred rites till jealous frenzy forces from her the fact that she is the mother of two children. These children she threatens to murder, but spares, and is herself executed; leaving it doubtful whether or not the younger priestess and inconstant lover are to "live happy ever after," or not.

In the *Sonnambula* a young lord puts up at the village inn, where two young women walk into his room at night; one from wantonness, the other because she is a somnambulist. The somnambulist, who was a bride on the point of marriage, is unable to convince her betrothed, by any amount of melodious argument, that she is innocent, till,

during a repetition of her somnambulism, he is compelled to admit that "seeing is believing," and all ends happily.

In the *Favorita* a young monk falls in love with a lady while dipping their mutual fingers in holy water; forsakes his monastery; lives a life of pleasure; goes to the wars, and returns, covered with glory, to claim her hand. But he discovers she is mistress to a king; so renounces the tainted bride, and returns to his monastery; where, the lady arriving, disguised as a male novice, he instantly reverts to his earthly passion, and proposes to her to elope. He then finds that she has poisoned herself, and, appointing the next day for his own death from a broken heart, the piece ends.

In *Lucrezia Borgia*, a beautiful youth, of unknown parentage, falls in love, at first sight, with his own mother! Not knowing this fact, but learning that she is the infamous Lucrezia Borgia, he clambers up and strikes out the first letter of her carved name with his dagger, leaving the word "Orgia." Seized, while completing this insult, and dragged before her husband, a pretended pardon from the latter, who believes him to be Lucrezia's paramour, is followed by the presentation of a cup of poison. Lucrezia offers an antidote as soon as she can, and he is saved for the nonce. But, attempting to destroy a whole group of her insulters, with whom he is feasting, she poisons him over again. A few drops only of

the antidote remain, which he magnanimously refuses to take, since there is not sufficient to share with his friends. He, therefore, dies; learning, at the last moment, that the fatal enchantress he had adored is his profligate mother.

In *Rigoletto*, the buffoon or jester in another most profligate court has a beautiful daughter, who is seduced by the Duke, his master, while he is encouraging the Duke's vices, and ridiculing the misery of an aged nobleman in whose family a like misfortune has occurred. Cursed solemnly by the old nobleman, he discovers that his daughter is ruined, and that he himself connived at her fall, thinking it was the abduction of some other woman. Finally, he hires an assassin to murder the lover, tie him up in a sack, and throw him into the river; but the daughter is, unfortunately, murdered in mistake by the hired bravo; so that, when the father triumphantly drags out the sack with the body, he finds it to be the corpse of his own child.

We have, besides these, an operatic version of Goethe's *Faust;* and the *Traviata*, a story of an "unfortunate," beloved by a gentleman of good fortune, and held to be (Heaven knows why) a more improper opera than even *Lucrezia Borgia.*

Such are the subjects which twice or three times a week recreate the understandings of the higher classes of Great Britain. Whatever of sensuality can be added to these themes by the sensuality of

sweet music, the glitter of lights and decoration, and the usual temptations of a theatre, find their full measure in that ever-fluctuating crowd, the whole entertainment winding up with the "ballet," an amusement which an intelligent Indian gentleman affirmed it had "paralysed him with astonishment" to find was an entertainment for both sexes.

"To the pure all things are pure," and "habit makes burdens light," and therefore I do not say that these extraordinarily vicious stories need of themselves corrupt any one. But I do say that there is something very ludicrous in the students of such subjects becoming discontented if any moral warning respecting their own world be offered, instead of these motiveless fables of sin.

The days are gone by when a haughty Herodias could cut off the head of the imprisoned reprover. The days are also gone by when the vengeful mistresses of French Kings obtained life-long "*lettres de cachet*" for those who dared to satirize them either in poetry or prose. But the day is *not* gone when the favourite preaching of the million is that which Pope describes as the worship of the fashionable crowd of his own time, when—

> "To rest, the cushion and soft Dean invite,
> Who never mentions hell to ears polite."

The received axiom of certain circles is, that anything may be done, but nothing must be talked about. The committed sin that has not budded

and blossomed into a "story about town" requires no angel's tear to blot it out, for it remains unregistered in the world's calendar. Ears polite have not heard it. Tongues polite have not practised variations upon it. Heads polite are not called upon for a decision as to its magnitude. But, to minds which reflect calmly and honestly, special blots will appear in that bright world of idleness and luxury, such as neither require magnifying nor extra darkening, but to be rendered merely as they are, for the teaching of eyes that might be dazed by the glitter that is not glory.

I am, Sir, &c.,

THE AUTHOR OF *LOST AND SAVED.*

June 18th, 1863.

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LOST AND SAVED.

CHAPTER I.

THE HOME OF LEONORA ALDI.

READER, were you ever at Tenby? I dare say not. It is more probable that you have visited Brighton, Weymouth, Eastbourne, Hastings, Torquay, Boulogne, Dieppe, Havre, Ostend, Honfleur, or any other bathing-place, than that you have been at Tenby! And yet that lovely town lies barely two hundred and fifty miles from London, and offers all that would seem to be irresistible attractions, both to sick and hale, in the multitude of its pleasant excursions, the long stretch of its level sands, and the magnificent views which surround it. Pembroke Castle, famous in history, is in the immediate neighbourhood;

and a letter to Oliver Cromwell from one of his generals, in June 1648, is said to be extant, which thus records the valour of the Tenbyites: "We have more trouble," says the irate soldier, "with these Welshmen than we looked to have; and the seaport town of Tenby holdeth out, as though she thought herself to be Pembroke Castle." Before a month was out, both Castle and town were taken.

A still quainter memory of Tenby is preserved in the history of two bishops, whose residences were in sight of each other, and who, being both celebrated gourmands, employed the ingenuity of their leisure—at a time when "telegrams" were unknown—in contriving a set of signals stating what each had planned in the way of a good dinner for that day. Both bishops continued telegraphing, *à qui mieux mieux*, until one became so thoroughly convinced of the superior Ude and Soyer inspirations of the other, that the flag of his episcopal castle was hauled down in token of cheerful surrender, and of the intention of the vanquished to dine with his right reverend brother. The record, however, closes somewhat gloomily; for this diverting rivalry of

culinary enjoyment was suddenly interrupted by one of the bishops, Bishop Barlow, coming "under the law" for disposing of the leaden gutter pipes and ornaments of his residence; whether to defray the excess of expenditure in copper stewpans, or, as history apologetically assures us, to provide portions for his five daughters, cannot now be known. But we have every reason to believe that good Bishop Barlow's stripping the palace of St. David's and Castle Llewhaden of their leaden roofs did not appear a heinous sin in the eyes of his clerical contemporaries, for we read that the five daughters were comfortably married to five other bishops, namely, the Bishops of Hereford, Lichfield, Coventry, and York; and Day and Wickham, successively Bishops of Winchester. "*Autre temps, autre mœurs.*"

These, however, are anecdotes belonging to bygone days; and Tenby lies now among the scattered ruins that speak of quaint histories and warlike times, clad in a cheerful smile. The sunshine gleaming on her slate-roofed houses lights up a hundred lovely nooks in Caermarthen Bay; in every nook a home, where, if the luxury of the gastronomic bishops be not attainable, there

is content, and elegance, and much merriment. Laughter sounds through the honeysuckle hedges that trail down the high banks to the very sands of the sea; and peeps of pretty gardens, with more variety of flowers than it would seem possible could be crammed into the small space, delight the passer-by with bursts of bloom and fragrance, as he roams along his shoreward path.

In one of these homes—the most hidden of all in its surrounding hedges of honeysuckle, sweetbriar, and travellers' joy; the most wonderful of all for the proportion of flowers to the size of its garden (which even boasted a succession of green terraces sloping to the sea, and some graceful copies of antique statues)—lived, at the time of which I am writing, a retired army captain, a widower, with his two daughters.

All the population of Tenby knew and respected Captain Brooke; and all knew his history, which, though simple, was, in the opinion of the female portion of that little society, "extremely romantic." For when Captain Brooke was a smart young officer, serving with the allied armies, his comrade and bosom friend was killed by his side; and, while he lay bleeding to death, he confided

to Captain Brooke that he was married to a Piedmontese of noble birth, against the will of her family, and that she and her little girl would be left friendless and forlorn in this world of trouble. "The bitterness of death to me," he said, "is leaving my Leonora without a home!"

Those were the last words of the slain; and Captain Brooke could only hope that his expiring comrade heard his attempt at consolation, by the sweet sad smile which rose amid the shadows of death already darkening over his handsome face, and sealed his brow with that unutterable expression of calm which death alone can show.

"While I have a home, Leonora Aldi shall never want one." That was Captain Brooke's answer.

He kept his promise. Though it really seemed in after days a perplexing one. When the horror and grief of war-time passed away; when the beautiful young widow and her child were quietly, and even cheerfully, dwelling in England; when Napoleon was exiled to St. Helena, and Captain Brooke himself had to return home; when, in short, circumstances so altered round them that a certain awkwardness sprung up,—Captain Brooke

had to consider how he could best fulfill his pledge; and being a man without female relatives or family ties, the bright idea occurred to him to make one vow more, to rivet the exact and permanent performance of the first. He proposed for the pretty widow, and was accepted; and he took the little villa near Tenby, and called it "The Home of Leonora Aldi." But the simple inhabitants of that Welsh seaport, being as much puzzled as the inhabitants of some Irish village, who, when a gentleman called his house "Il bel Retiro," transformed the name to "Balrattery," were completely posed by the title given to the Tenby cottage; and, after struggling with various misnomers, the place grew to be called simply "The HOME:" and as such was known to all the little world of Tenby. And a Home it was, to all intents and purposes. Whatever of sacred and tender may lie in the spell of that dear word which foreign languages cannot translate, was to be found there, in tranquil perfection.

The Italian widow had not long survived her second marriage; but she died thanking Captain Brooke for all his kindness, and she lived long enough to leave him two children, in addition to

the little orphan he had gathered to his bosom with that friendless wife. He loved that pale gentle girl for her mother's sake and her own: loved her as well as his own Beatrice, the merry maid of sixteen, wild as a fawn and beautiful as a picture: loved her as well as his dark-eyed and daring Owen, who, cradled within sound of the dashing waves, was already a midshipman in the royal navy. They were a very happy family; sought and respected by their equals, sought and beloved by the poor. Familiar to the toiling fisherman, the distressed sailor, the wayworn woman and her babe,—was the steep path that led to The Home. Charity and tenderness dwelt there; hope and help. As to more ambitious hospitalities, they were rare and unfrequent. Captain Brooke never gave "a dinner party" in his life; but now and then one friend, or even two friends, dined at The Home. Some stray geologist, or some remarkable and pleasant tourist, was invited to partake their meal; and on these occasions Mariana, the elder sister, and Beatrice, the younger, set out their table with flowers, and the captain himself decanted his best wine, and in the evening the girls sang to the guitar or

listened to grave conversation, and they all went smiling to bed, with a gay "good night," and a tender "God bless you," to meet in the morning with the same joy and in the same peace. So happy, in their obscure corner at Tenby, were all the inmates of that lovely cottage, pointed out to strangers as "The Home."

So happy! up to a certain time, at which our story commences, when the cloud and the breeze, which were to grow into murky tempest, came on, one fresh summer's day, and brought change, and darkness, and shipwreck, tears and sorrow, into the pleasant garden and the sunny chambers, and the hearts of the dwellers by the lone sea-shore.

CHAPTER II.

A BIRTHDAY FÊTE.

WELL, there was no sorrow yet. On the contrary, the party from The Home were out on the shore celebrating, by a simple festival of their own, the birthday of the handsome sailor-boy Owen. They were to drink tea on the sands. Why they should drink tea on the sands, instead of in the comfortable sunny drawing-room of the cottage, let the lovers of picnic meals determine; it must have been pleasanter, or they would not have done it. Captain Brooke was there, smiling and animated, chatting gaily with his midshipman son. Mariana, the elder of the girls, sat in the deep recess of the little sandy cove, making a parade of her tea and cake, unpacking them out of a rustic basket, and setting in the midst of all a glass vase full of the beautiful white moss roses, for which

Captain Brooke's garden was so celebrated. Beatrice, the younger girl, scarcely yet weaned from childish play, had hung her beautiful brown hair with seaweed, whose delicate strips of various colours drooped over her cheeks and neck. A "mermaid toilette" she called it, "in honour of the birthday of a sailor brother;" and surely no ornament that ever was worn could be more beautiful than those fairy wreaths of crimson and green, and tawny yellow—damp, pliant, and pendent—mixing with the brown curls that floated in rich profusion on her shoulders. A large Newfoundland dog barked and scratched among the lazy starfish that moved on the shore; and a tall, grave-looking young man, a friend and neighbour, Maurice Lewellyn, leaned against the rocky steps that led from the garden of The Home to the seashore.

Presently Beatrice called to the dog, which leaped caressingly to her hand, "Come, doggie," she said, "Come, Owen,—let us have a race along the level sands. Let us see who will run a mile and win. Maurice Lewellyn shall be umpire; he was made for an umpire, he is so grave; one, two, three, and away!"

Laughing as they started, the young brother and sister set off full speed, their white teeth glittering with that smile peculiar to southern blood, their soft eager eyes full of sunshine and mirth. The boy tossed his cap back to Mariana, sitting tranquil among her little household preparations, and ran bareheaded by the side of the smiling Atalanta who had challenged him. Her white dress fluttered on the breeze, her strange "mermaid" head-dress,—hair and seaweed confused and intermingled,—shone in the evening sun, now burnished brassy brown, now crimson and green and yellow. The stretch of bright sands lay before them, skirted on one side by a calm blue sea specked with snowy sails; and on the other by broken rocky banks, sweet with the perfume of honeysuckle and travellers' joy. The evening light touched every object with glory. Swiftly they flew over the sands, those two merry young creatures, and the great heavy handsome Newfoundland dog. Suddenly Beatrice turned, and flew back like a white sea-gull to the little cove where her sister sat.

"I thought I should win!" said she, laughing and panting, as she dropped on her knees.

Owen stopped, and shouted "Shame!" with a breathless smile. The dog went careering on, then halted, looked round, and ran back barking and bounding to his mistress.

"Your pardon, doggie, for cheating you," said the laughing girl, as she patted his forehead. "I said we would run a mile, and I have run half a mile out and half a mile back."

"What does the umpire say?" asked Owen.

"The umpire thinks Beatrice a little unprincipled cheat," said the young man with a grave smile. "And now let her rest and take tea: her cheeks are as flushed as the sky. Let her rest, and watch that lovely sight opposite."

They did watch, while a yacht which stood as close in to the shore as her draught of water would permit, nearly opposite their place of merry-making, slackened sail, — and then putting off its cockle-shell of a boat, landed, within a yard or two of their stairs, a young gentleman who, without further ceremony than lifting his hat, advanced rapidly to the group and accosting Captain Brooke with easy courtesy, asked if there was not a short cut to Treherne House somewhere thereabouts.

"Yes," said Captain Brooke. "Up these steps and through my garden there is a very short way to the house you want—not that I have much acquaintance with the inmates of the house, though we claim cousinhood."

"Do you?" said the stranger. "I claim cousinhood too, and have landed to see them. My name is Treherne—Montagu Treherne."

"My name is Gaveston Brooke," said the old officer smiling. "And now we have gone through the ceremony of introduction, will you pause a little on the sands while we take tea, and I will accompany you myself as guide afterwards. Let me present my son to you, and my daughters."

Marian smiled and bowed. Beatrice was ashamed of her flushed cheeks and her absurd head-dress; and while she also bowed she made several private attempts to pull the seaweed out of her hair, and restore order to her curls;—not from vanity—she was not thinking of her beauty—but because she felt ashamed of appearing before a stranger like a romping untidy child. She soon recovered her embarrassment, however, and laughed and blushed when taxed with her disloyal endeavours to alter the "mermaid head-dress" sacred to the day.

and made a not ungraceful salutation to the ladies, "you are to sing that song for us, which Lady Eudocia Wollingham heard on board the yacht at Cowes."

Ratty looked doubtfully up, then smiled; and then, without further preface, in a voice that would have called old Incledon's ghost out of the tomb, sang as follows: —

It was a captin, bold and gay,
As was loved by many a maiden,
In a merchant ship he sailed away
With gold and good stuff laden;
Until he came to an island fair
Where the syrens were disportin',
And he seed one combing of her hair,
And her he fell a courtin'.

Then he vowed the vow as he always vowed
When to win was his endeavour: —
"A Hadmiral of you might be proud,
And I 'll love you my love for hever!"
But when his sailing time was come
Away this captin started,
And he left the syren in her home,
Alone and broken-hearted.

Then she callèd Neptune, king of the sea,
Who rose at her commandin';
"That captin has deceivèd me,
Prewent his ever landin'."

So the stormy wind came on to blow,
With the lightning and the thunder,
And the ship tossed high, and the ship tossed low,
Till she sank the deep waves under!

And when the storm was overpast
And the wind lulled on the billow,—
That captin false he floated past
With a wave for his head pillow!
Now captins gay that sails the seas
To love's delights aspirin',
Deceive what simple maids you please
But don't deceive a syren.

Having sung these stanzas with the gravity of a judge and the shyness of a school-girl, Ratty retired a step or two behind his companions, and waited further orders.

"Don't you know any serious song, Ratty?" said the young midshipman —"something more sentimental? I 'm quite shocked at the conduct of that water-witch. Sing us a real love-song."

"Well, I do know a little bit of a song, sir, but there 's not much in it beyond the tune. They call it 'Out at Sea.'"

Phœbe dear, your quiet eyes
Shine on me;
With the evening star they rise,
Out at sea!

Rippling o'er my ocean track
Their beauty gleams;
Midnight watches bring them back,
And daylight dreams.
All I hope, and all I fear,
Loved by thee,
Haunts my heart, oh, Phœbe dear!
Out at sea!

There was, as Ratty said, nothing in the words; and yet the sweet clear manly voice, the utter simplicity with which it was sung, the hour, the soft calm sunset, the atmosphere of youth and happiness around that birthday party, gave something to the song it had not in itself; and when Treherne, looking at the furled sails of his own yacht, murmured the words "Out at Sea," Beatrice blushed.

She had no reason for blushing; she was extremely angry with herself for it — it embarrassed her; but she hoped it was not noticeable, and she looked shyly away from the rest of the party to her sister's face, as if seeking for calm there. For calm was the very essence of Mariana's beauty; and her large reverential eyes were fixed on the evening star at that moment with a sort of answering light. And on her eyes, and not on

any other star, were fixed the grave glances of Maurice Lewellyn.

So they strolled home; and the girls and Owen went in, and their father and Maurice undertook to guide Captain Treherne to Treherne House. As the young midshipman threw himself on the cushions in the bay-window, where the moon already poured down a silver light as in a picture, he said, "Well, if ever I saw a fellow who was like Apollo in the heathen mythology, Captain Treherne is the man. I never saw such a handsome fellow! Did you see, Beatrice, when the wind took his hair and the light of the sunset was on his face? he was like the figure of Phaëton, but grander—like Apollo. Don't you think he is like Apollo, Beatrice?"

And Beatrice laughed, and said, "She had never seen Apollo, and therefore could not judge of the resemblance;" but Beatrice blushed again, only she cared less for the fact than before, because there was no light but the moon, and no one by to see.

But she stood at the window so long that at last the gentle hand of her sister touched her shoulder, telling her it was time to go to rest.

And Captain Brooke came in, and the "Good night, God bless you!" of each to each in that happy little circle again fell like dew on the closing flowers; and the hush of prayer preceded the hush of sleep in the happy Home.

CHAPTER III.

LOVE.

I MAY as well inform the reader at once that these two young people "fell in love with one another at first sight," as it is phrased. A method of establishing a preference which is unintelligible to some and condemned by others, but which nevertheless from time to time asserts its triumphant claim to be as good a method as any other, by some happy union which proves that the instinctive suddenness of the choice was no bar to constancy, nor evidence of shallowness. Not always so; not often so; for the most part that love has wings such as Dædalus and Icarus perished in trying; wings fastened with wax, that melt in the heat of the noonday sun; and such preferences as have that sudden rise have as sudden a cessation—windfalls of the heart's

budding spring—which show as fair as other fruit for a little while and then drop and are forgotten, while the slow sure harvest ripens on.

But Beatrice and Montagu Treherne did, as I say, "fall in love at first sight," and anyone but simple Captain Brooke would have seen that they did so. He did not see it. His life was passed in early days in the busy energy of a soldier's career, and since those days in the narrow home circle we have described. Worldly calculations and worldly experiences were entirely out of his line. If he had been the most acute of chaperons he would have altered nothing in the easy permission to Montagu and Beatrice to pass their days together, nor would it have appeared to Captain Brooke the least unlikely, or undesirable to the family of the young man, that he, being heir to an earldom, should marry the little Welsh girl Beatrice Brooke. But he never thought at all about the matter: he found Montagu an agreeable addition to the family circle, and his calculation did not go beyond. Everybody was satisfied. They claimed cousinhood after the manner of the young Frenchman who said it was a variable species of relationship—where, if you liked the

lady, you said "ma cousine," and if you disliked or were indifferent, "une cousine à moi."

Montagu was extremely glad to be cousin to Beatrice Brooke—indeed he insisted more on this, than the much nearer cousinhood that existed between him and the beautiful golden-haired brood of first cousins, daughters of Lady Eudocia Wollingham of Treherne House, whom he had ostensibly landed to visit, and between whom and the Brookes some sort of intimacy had sprung up since his arrival. As much intimacy as Lady Eudocia could condescend to, for she was a very great lady indeed, and held that the egg-shell china of which she was made should not be set on the same shelf with the rough pottery of God's other creatures. Indeed she had been heard in conversation with a female friend to rebut the generally received axiom that "all men are equals in the sight of heaven," by the single phrase, "Such nonsense you know, my dear; as if they *could* be!" and the five golden-haired daughters were trained in their mother's creed.

She had no son: five Disappointments, as she called her girls, had alone blessed her union with the deceased Mr. Wollingham, and the stately

widow had her own dreams of collateral motherhood when she invited Captain Treherne to pay a visit in his yacht to Tenby, whither she had repaired for the sea-bathing of the least robust of her progeny.

Nothing is so obstinate as the behaviour of babies in these cases of heirdom of titles. Where it is of no consequence whatever whether girls or boys should be born, both sexes carelessly enter the world, or a series of saucy little males merrily lay claim to their share of the world's great scramble; but when, as in the case of the earldom of Caërlaverock, it is of unspeakable consequence that "the next should be a boy,"—pertinacious girls come wailing to their cradles; the cockades provided by hopeful mother and sanguine nurse are laid aside; and the cackling of joy is changed to sighs and murmurs.

Considering the very numerous additions to the Treherne family, the babies of that race had shown more than common rebellion. The generation immediately preceding this, had been composed of seven sisters. The justly incensed old Earl, their father, in vain endeavoured to set matters right by a confused and intricate will, limiting

the descent of the fortune as far as he could, to any male heir who should marry out of the stock of female heirs. That celebrated old king of Britain, Brutus with the Blue Shield, — who, having thirty daughters to provide for, sent twenty-nine of them to Silvius, King of Italy, to be given to the noblest men descended from the nation of Troy, — was only one degree more puzzled than the Earl of Caërlaverock in the disposal of his girls.

The seven sisters were all handsome but one. Tall fine brunettes, with glad glittering eyes and good complexions; and when in process of time these ladies became handsome old maids, or handsome elderly matrons, you could still see how beautiful they had been,—in eyes whose long shining had kept the glitter and lost the gladness; and in complexions carefully copied from the originals once in their possession, which they (and few other persons of their generation) remembered in their first freshness.

Lady Eudocia had been the Beauty, and the favourite. In all families, as in all congregated masses, herds of animals, and groups of people, there is one who is leader—you scarce know why.

It is not always the cleverest — it is rarely the most amiable—for goodness and generosity have much yielding in them. A strong will and some adventitious advantages will often give the position which habit confirms, and which no one thinks of disputing. In families of girls, "the Beauty" is generally the ruler of the house. Let those who have small eyes and red hands cast up accounts, and help in little household drudgeries. Let those who have snub noses which redden with cold in winter, fetch the Beauty's shawl and look out her music for her, but let Beauty herself serenely enjoy the lovely corporeal covering given her by heaven, and live that life among the roses which is fitted for her till she marries the Prince of the fairy tale.

Lady Eudocia had lived that life. She was accustomed to consider that the roses were her share, and the thorns the share of other people. The only thorn she knew in earlier life was that her elder sister was mother of the first male heir in the whole Treherne brood; and there was no resenting it, for the poor soul died when the boy was born, leaving that welcome spark of male

life to replace her own insignificant female existence in the craving family.

The second of the seven sisters was ugly—the Cinderella of the set. She was christened Diana, but went by the name of Dumpty, and, being eight-and-twenty, was considered quite an old maid. She was short; she was vulgar-looking; she was, as her mother ceaselessly informed her, "horribly like her father," a rich West Indian proprietor whom the family had condescended to marry and had long since forgotten. Her eyes alone redeemed the plainness of her face; something fond and wistful and intelligent was in them, as if looking for love and companionship that she never could find. She it was, who did all the small nondescript tasks; looked out and copied songs, sat up with any who were sick, cast up accounts, embroidered her sisters' names in the corner of their handkerchiefs, and took the dogs for a run when it was too cold for the complexions of the rest of the family.

She found both companionship and love, however: though in the finding she was considered to have utterly disgraced her noble origin! It so happened that Eudocia fell sick. Beauty had

the small-pox. Anything like the confusion this created in the family was never seen before. The handsome sisters were packed off instanter for fear they should take the disease. The mother of that generation of "disappointments" wrung her hands with dismay at the chance of the loveliest of those seven faces being blurred and marked. Dumpty was set to watch day and night, besides a professional nurse to wait on the sufferer. When Beauty recovered Dumpty fell ill; and having endured extreme fatigue in attendance on her sister, matters went rather hard with her; but she too recovered, and all went on as usual.

One day, soon after her convalescence was complete, Dumpty was in the library. She was sitting, perched up on the library steps, reading the martyrdom of Christopher Norton in the "Phœnix Britannicus;" stooping over the strange old book, extremely chilled, her nose red and her fingers blue. Presently her mother called from the drawing-room—"Is that you, my child, sitting in the cold?" To which Dumpty judiciously, though ungrammatically, replied—"No, mamma,—*it's only me*;" being aware that of

course "my child" meant Beauty. But Mr. Bertie Lewellyn, the doctor, came smiling through the open door, and said, "Well, but it is too cold for 'only me;' 'only me' should not read in the dusk, because it is bad for the eyes, especially after such an illness."

Dumpty looked up, and shut her book, and smiled, and felt flurried. Oddly enough, she had just been thinking of Mr. Lewellyn — thinking how he would have borne the pain of martyrdom, and thinking how kind and skilful he was: what a gentle cheerful voice he had; how clever he looked; and how pleasant it had been during her illness to seem a "first object" for a while: and Dumpty gave a little quiet sigh, as she thought of resuming her habitual position as Nobody. Now, as the physician spoke to her, she felt, as I have said, a little flurried, as though she had been surreptitiously thinking of him without his leave; and though she shut her book, she remained awkwardly enough sitting on her perch on the library steps, till Mr. Lewellyn came forward and offered his hand to help her down, saying with a smile, "'Only me' is in great want of some one to take as good care of her as she does of other people."

And when he had said this, a very visible change came over his countenance, and he spoke so very much quicker than usual, and what he did say was so extraordinary, that Dumpty was glad to drop off her perch into the chair he drew for her: for she made out with a beating heart that he was expressing his excessive admiration of her unselfish character; his conviction that she would be the blessing of any man's home; and his hope, though his position was not one that could satisfy a worldly mind, that he was the identical man whose home she would condescend to bless!

How her frightened little senses ever took this meaning in she hardly knew, and what she answered she hardly guessed; but she became Mrs. Lewellyn that same winter; and though her mother and sisters were all extremely ashamed of what she had done, and never could think of it without vexation and embarrassment, even when in process of time Mr. Lewellyn became Sir Bertie Lewellyn, and a very celebrated physician, yet, in spite of the disapprobation of the family, Dumpty was as happy as the day was long, and so was her husband, and so was her son, the very Maurice Lewellyn who walked on the sands at

Tenby with Captain Brooke's daughters, as we have already seen.

So Eudocia was married to Mr. Wollingham, and Dumpty to the "doctor," as her sisters said with a contemptuous snort; and Lady Jane had married her cousin, and died, leaving the male heir of the family in Captain Treherne; and two other sisters became old maids, for want of rich *partis*, or honest men who thought they might be, like ugly Dumpty, a blessing in any home;—and the youngest became Marchioness of Updown.

I do not know how I came to write this title so unostentatiously—in a mere line describing what was the destiny also of other people,—for such a method does not, I am sure, convey in the least to the reader's mind the magnitude of her position. She became

MARCHIONESS OF UPDOWN.

And though her husband was neither wise nor great, but a fat foolish man, with a meek fidgety temper—and there are, as we know, no less than twenty-one marquises in the British peerage—she somehow contrived to be the greatest lady that

ever was seen out of a fairy tale. Her sisters called her The Marchioness, as the servants did. Her husband called her The Marchioness. It seemed as if there was no other Marchioness in the world. As there is a Whale among fishes, so was this Marchioness among her peers, and among the minnows of less aristocratic society. That great Leviathan of the deep was not a whit more remarkable or superior in the water than our Marchioness on dry land. If there was a ball, party, or soirée to be given, her absence was as bitter as that of the hero of the old-fashioned song "Robin Adair." If there was a procession, coronation, or festive ceremony of any kind, the world stood still on its axis till the Marchioness had a place assigned to her. She went to Court not spangled with scattered diamonds, like the sky on a fine night, but crusted over with them, like barnacles on a ship's hull. Diamonds, rubies, emeralds, turquoises, and pearls were spread over her, as the farmer spreads lumps of fertilising lime over his land. And, like the land, she appeared to thrive under them. Every year her arms were rounder, her bracelets larger, her figure more corpulent. Every year the sweep of her

full drapery encroached more and more on the ground occupied by her scantier-skirted neighbours. Every year her step became more flat-footed and imperious. In England (or rather in London, the England of the world of fashion) she shone with the splendour of a perpetual Catherine's wheel; and abroad she represented, in the opinion of amazed foreigners, the style and condition of an English "grande dame." In vain were the French ladies better dressed, Poles more graceful, Spaniards more beautiful, Austrians better born, Germans more accomplished, Russians more splendid—even in her own line of jewellery. No matter—The Marchioness entered, and "bore away the bell."

She had no children. Lady Eudocia was glad of that. That one circumstance supported her suffering soul against the bursts of envy which from time to time afflicted it. She had no children, that motherly-looking Marchioness; and it was a soothing thought to her tender relative.

These, and happy Dumpty, alone remained of the brilliant sisterhood at the time my story opens—the two maiden Ladies Treherne having

died within a brief period of each other. There was not much sorrow for the double event: a little cloud of black and grey vestments overshadowed the bodies of the family for a few weeks, during which they attended no balls, went surreptitiously to the play, and sighed gravely when they met or received acquaintances. At the end of that time all was again *couleur de rose*, and no difference perceptible, except that two pearl necklaces and an amethyst "parure" had passed to two of the younger nieces of the glittering-eyed defunct.

The present holder of the earldom of Caërlaverock completed the surviving family circle. He had represented England at various foreign courts, and by preference resided abroad; a more elegant or accomplished old goose never sat through his idle afternoons in a brocaded silk dressing-gown, with a bell-rope round his waist. He was eighty-six, but beyond a slight deafness, he showed no signs of infirmity. He was alert, peevish, and garrulous of anecdotes, principally respecting Potemkin and the Russian court. His wife, who had been a celebrated Russian beauty, attended him with the most

sedulous care. Buoyed up by a natural gaiety of temper, her harshest criticism on her selfish old mate never went beyond the fact that "ce cher milord has his nerfs a little what you call *taquinés*, to-day." Such as he was, he was from family circumstances chief of the three guardians nominated for Montagu Treherne; who by a clause in his grandfather's will, would not come of age till he was twenty-six, and could not marry before that time without the consent of all three guardians.

Oh! that Will!

The wills of most old gentlemen are somewhat willful, and much must be forgiven to an old earl, who on the eve of parting with his "*animula, blandula, vagula, comesque*," parted also with the earldom (scarcely less precious in his opinion), and reflected, that the man in immediate succession had no children at all, and his brother only seven daughters; and that out of fourteen lives, only two sparks of male heirdom existed — the son of the deceased Lady Jane, and the son of "the Doctor's wife," Lady Di Lewellyn, or Lady Di Pillula, as her sisters wittily called her. But whatever his excuses

may be, the earl made a will that was the source of most intense anxiety and tribulation to his family,—and one result of its provisions was, that the event of Montagu Treherne's marriage seemed to them the pivot on which the world's axis ought to turn.

CHAPTER IV.

PLOTS AND PLANS.

MONTAGU TREHERNE'S marriage! What young man is there who is the head of a family, or the eventual heir of a family, or, indeed, who is of no importance at all, who has not found himself in this respect the subject of infinite debate? Maiden aunts and matron aunts, uncles, parents, cousins, and friends, all take upon them the

> Hubble, bubble,
> Toil and trouble,

of deciding what should be his destiny. This girl is recommended, and that is scouted. This woman is abused as preventing, and that one is shunned as contriving. He is quarrelled for as if he were a bone thrown into a kennel. Chances are risked for him as if he were to be won by a throw of dice at a gambling-table.

If he belong to a certain set, and be of a

certain rank, and appear to be choosing out of the sacred pale of that set, a sort of hue and cry is instantly raised; the "stop thief" of polite society whose natural prey he is considered to be from his position. If he remain a bachelor, it is generally considered the fault of the reigning beauty of the day. "If it had not been for that horrid Mrs. This, or that wicked Lady That, he would certainly have proposed for Florentina, or Emily, or Lucy, or Mary Jane;" and Florentina and Mary Jane, on their parts, should they continue single, always protest that they were "very near" marrying him, but for circumstances they "do not like further to allude to."

And all the while, basely or honestly, prudently or rashly, with fickleness or constancy, the man is "gangin' his ain gait," and entirely consulting his own inclinations; as Montagu Treherne did in the present instance, by falling in love with Beatrice Brooke.

Lady Eudocia Wollingham had always been the most tranquil of her nephew's disposers, for though she did not exactly know the provisions of her grandfather's will, she knew that what was desired was that he should marry one of his

cousins. Her five girls were all undeniably beautiful; she took it for granted he would be husband to one of them; and till they were old enough to come out, she smiled complacently and visited enthusiastically wherever Treherne's wandering fancy seemed to lead him.

And when that fancy made a prodigious halt at the shrine of a certain charming Lady Nesdale, familiarly called "Milly" Nesdale, Lady Eudocia took to loving Lady Nesdale very much indeed, and to calling her "Milly," as her other friends did;—and asking her to dinner to meet her nephew whenever he came, for she thought it would "occupy" him till the first budding Wollingham came out,—an event which was now imminent. She gave him a perpetual ticket to her opera box, and a place in the open carriage to all races and breakfasts that he had a mind to; for the deceased and forgotten Wollingham was very wealthy, and she had a larger fortune than many duchesses. So Treherne, on the whole, led a gay pleasant life, and though he had entered diplomacy in imitation of his grand-uncle, the Earl, he had been brought into Parliament for the borough Mr. Wollingham had formerly represented, and

therefore remained in England, attending "to his duties" *tant bien que mal*, during the London season,—and hunting, yachting, or shooting when that busy period was over.

Montagu Treherne had also great personal advantages. Ever since Jane Eyre loved Mr. Rochester, a race of novel-heroes have sprung up whose chief merit seems to be that, as "Punch" expresses it, they could "knock down a Mammoth or a Megatherium." Brutal and selfish in their ways, and rather repulsive in person, they are, nevertheless, represented as perfectly adorable and carrying all before them, like George Sand's galley-slave. Treherne belonged to a more old-fashioned race of heroes. He was, like most of his family, faultlessly handsome; and that had its weight with Beatrice Brooke. People may argue against it as they will, but the instinctive leaning of inexperienced human nature is to trust in beauty. "Angels are painted fair." No one imagines a squat Venus, a lank-haired scraggy Eve, or a hunchy, beetle-browed Apollo. An ugly man may be passionately beloved, and so may an ugly woman; but the superstition of the heart remains, nevertheless, through all ages the

same, that to find "a fair face and a false heart" seems an unnatural union, and that beauty is "a letter of recommendation,"—however it may lie, as letters of recommendation often do.

Great, then, was the mutual admiration for each other of Beatrice and Treherne, and never was there so merry a love-making or so perfect a trust. The idea of not being beloved never crossed Montagu Treherne's mind for an instant. He had never in his life wooed in vain. His golden hair, his sweet smile, his pleasant gaiety, his gentlemanlike bearing, had never failed to please. As to Beatrice, how should she doubt? what could she know of the world of match-making and match-breaking, pensioned sin, and evil temptations, in her pleasant corner of the earth? Each was as sure of each as if they had met in paradise, where the lack of a second Eve secured the constancy of Adam. Treherne, from the security of self-confidence, and Beatrice from the security of innocence. But no word of love was spoken. They would not have been so happy, perhaps, if that Rubicon had been passed. They lived that life of undisturbed daily companionship, which lovers who

have enjoyed it may weigh against the heaviest after-grief, and still find the balance waver. In that sunny autumn, what a crowding of remembered days! What rambles along the seashore; what lingerings and gazings from Philip's seat; what laughing-talk with the quaint boatmen; what sails over the bay of Carmarthen; what sketching of the distant coasts of Glamorgan, Devon, and Somerset!

What a wild scrambling day that was which they spent at Saundersfoot, watching the coal vessels load — the dusk figures of the colliers against the red evening sky not unlike a tranquil pandemonium! What a merry party that was to Patter dockyard, to see the launch of one ship and the models of others, whose ribs looked as if no storm could ever break them! How amused they were the morning they went over to the little bare island of Caldy — no trees, no scenery, nothing but a vast rabbit-warren — rabbits peeping up from their holes and skipping back into them; rabbits teeming and thriving in spite of continual massacre, a massacre which consigned so many of them to death in the war-time, that the owner of the island is said to have made three hundred

pounds in one year by selling their skins for soldiers' caps. What a delicious moonlight shone over their way that day in September, when they rode back from Pembroke Castle by the village of Pynally and Giltar, after sitting out on the top of the ruined castle quoting scraps of history, and trying to remember dates!

And that picnic to St. Catherine's Isle, could they ever forget it? or the great storm that overtook them one Saturday at the ruins of Lawrenny, when all the umbrellas but one were blown inside out, and Owen's round hat flew as high as a seagull and out of sight? Or that other day, sultry and calm, when they visited the great ruined court of Carew Castle planning how to rebuild and inhabit it, with a splendour worthy of Queen Elizabeth's day? Or that pleasant drive to Stackpoole Court, when Lady Eudocia went to call on the Cawdor family, and the rest walked about the park? Or, better yet, the ride along the road called the Ridgeway, with the bold rocky shore on one side, and the rich vale of Florence on the other — that day when Beatrice found her pony so restive, and Treherne got down and resettled the bit, looking

up in her smiling face to see if she were frightened?

Or (dearest of all!) that day when nothing happened which anyone would remember but their two selves—the day they stood looking at the tomb of John Moore, of Moorhanger, Devon, who died for love in 1639, having come unsuccessfully a-courting to a second wife; and Owen read the inscription and laughed, and asked if Treherne believed it possible a man *could* die of love; and Treherne said it was quite possible "if he was not beloved again;" and Beatrice felt he was looking at her, though she dared not look up!

Ah! who has not such days to remember? When the softness of affection was in the tones that have since said unimaginable bitternesses, or been silenced for ever by death: when trifles told us we were all in all to each other: and every sight or sound in Nature was one link more in the golden chain that bound us together;—that strong invisible chain, whose breaking strands the anchor of our life's hope;—and leaves us to drift over trackless seas.

CHAPTER V.

LADY DIANA LEWELLYN.

In October the days began to get stormy and cold, and Captain Brooke was much from home, and anxious and low-spirited at times. Some speculation in coal-mines and iron-works in which he had been persuaded to take shares, and through which he had sanguinely expected to give his children "very pretty portions," had gone wrong through the mismanagement or dishonesty of some of the parties concerned, and there was the usual amount of difficulty in unravelling accounts and ascertaining the exact condition of affairs.

But though there was less riding and sailing, from the two combined causes of the war of the elements and the troubles of fortune, Beatrice and Treherne were not less together. Sir Bertie Lewellyn came every year for a stated period to Tenby, and it was to his skill as a physician,

(though she affected to scorn him as a relation) that Lady Eudocia trusted for the life of the pleasantest and loveliest of all her lovely girls, Helen Wollingham.

Helen was born the very same day as Beatrice Brooke; and they made out of that, as young girls will, a plea for a little romance of friendship, more than existed between the other sisters and Beatrice, more than would have been suffered to exist had Lady Eudocia been aware of it. But it was principally at her "Aunt Dumpty's" that Helen saw Beatrice. Lady Diana Lewellyn was not so addicted to "condescending" as her grander sister, and she received the Brooke girls with the frankest pleasure, and not without a tender instinct that in the meek and pious elder girl she saw the hoped-for bride of her only son. They all met there — Maurice Lewellyn and Marian, Beatrice and Helen and Treherne. They sang and practised and read together, while Sir Bertie was making professional visits, and Captain Brooke was taking long rides, or attending meetings about the unlucky iron-works.

Aunt "Dumpty," as she was still called, was very agreeable. It might be said of her, as Rush

formerly said of Jeremy Taylor, that her conversation "had all the pleasantness of a comedy and all the usefulness of a sermon." Her whole nature was of the sunniest degree of cheerfulness and warmth; her welcome seemed to quadruple the welcome given by usual people. She amused the young people, too, by odd scraps of quaint information about Wales and its former history. She had not lost her love of ancient books, though she no longer perched on the library steps to read them. She culled from the old laws of Wales, strange rules now forgotten. The confused sort of mercy without a poor-law, which enacted that a man should stand free from punishment for theft of meat, if he could prove that he was a necessitous man and exiled—that he had been three days and three nights without lodging and without alms, and had passed three townships and nine houses in each township unrelieved, and in the words of Hood, had

Stood with amazement, houseless by night,

till, impelled by hunger, he committed the theft!

And that law which must have been the delight of those who approve of aristocratic privileges, and

the puzzle of dog-stealers,—that there was one animal whose value might advance from fourpence to a pound the same day. A buckhound, should he be owned by a boor in the morning, his value was fourpence; should he be given to a baron his value was half a pound; but if the King owned him before night, his value was a pound!

She told them how, in the days of Welsh bards and Welsh harpists, the harp of a chief musician was of exactly the same value as an oak tree; and for the price of two tuning keys to the harp you might buy a coble boat. And how by a quaint rule of superiority it was decreed, that if the KING had a desire for poetry, the chief of song should sing two songs—one addressed to God, and the other to the chieftains: but if the QUEEN desired that amusement in her chamber, the domestic bard was to sing for her "three verses concerning Camlan in a low voice, lest the family be disturbed!"

Yet that which in England in our day is extremely rare, and even among foreigners is only occasional—the skill of performing instrumental music—was then reckoned part of the usual educa-

tion of a gentleman; and a young Welshman who could not play a prelude on the harp, and give an extempore stanza, would be like a man who in the present day could not make a bow or dance a quadrille. "Canu cân pedwar acceunu," or to sing music in four parts properly, was reckoned one of "the four and twenty games" a well-educated Gaul should excel in; and most satisfactory to authors, poets, and composers, is the account given of the effect of some of these chaunts. Rhys Meigen, for instance, is stated to have *dropped down dead* at hearing a philosophic ode recited which had been written against him by the celebrated Dafydd ap Gwilym!

Worse than poor sore-hearted Keats, who died of reviewers; or even the matron of Rugby, who is said to have committed suicide from dejection at believing herself pointed at as the matron in that most perfect of juvenile fictions "Tom Brown's School Days."

She read them the account of the old Lord of Kemes, a Pembrokeshire worthy, who lived to the age of one hundred and five, always in health; and at ninety-nine, his servant making some mistake in bringing his horse, the impatient non-

agenarian set out and walked twenty miles home. He is also said to have eaten a handful of nuts, shells and all, a few years before his death, and to have carried all his teeth to the grave with him.

More romantic was the account given of the Welsh saint, Saint David — a remarkably handsome man, and a friend of King Arthur's, who built twelve monasteries, was Archbishop for sixty-five years, and lived to a hundred and forty-seven. And Owen of Kemes says he does not himself believe, but merely tells it "to recreate the reader's spirits," that the reason the nightingale's song is never heard in Pembrokeshire is that Saint David was so disturbed when saying his evening prayers by "the sweete tunings of the nightengall," and so "letted (or hindered) by the melodie of that bird," that he piously entreated of heaven that none might sing evermore within his diocese!

More interesting still to her youthful audience was that account—by the reading of which Aunt Dumpty beguiled a rainy day—of "the real story of Lear and Cordelia." Beatrice had never been to the play; but she was well acquainted with

Shakspeare, and breathlessly she listened to the story of her favourite heroine. How Lear (or Llyr) was son to the celebrated King Bleiddud, who built the city of Bath, dedicated its healing waters to Minerva, and was "never at rest from devising works of ingenuity," till at last, like Icarus in fabulous times, and Mr. Cocking in later days, he imagined he had invented a parachûte in the form of a pair of wings, and was dashed to pieces attempting to descend from a high tower in London.

How the story of the strange adventures of his son Llyr had been followed by Shakspeare closely enough in the beginning, but not to the end; the dramatic unities requiring a more sudden catastrophe than in truth took place: for, in the real history, the King of France gave such effectual aid to the insulted old King (not only giving him troops, but sending Cordelia with them, for fear the French soldiery would not obey Llyr) that the outraged monarch chased his two sons-in-law out of the kingdom and reigned in quiet to the end of his days. But Cordelia receiving news of her husband's death in the midst of her father's successes, would not

return to France, and remained with Llyr till he died. Then, and not till then, poor Cordelia's fortunes changed. Conquered by her sister's two sons, the Princes of Scotland and Cornwall, she stabbed herself in prison, unable to endure her reverses; whereby (as the old chronicler, Geoffrey of Monmouth, says) "she lost her soul!"

And all this happened, adds the chronicler, before Rome was built, or Isaiah and Hosea began to prophecy.

CHAPTER VI.

EROS AND ANTEROS.

So, in such ridings, singings, and talkings, did that happy autumn at Tenby pass away! Does the enumeration of them seem tedious to the reader? They seemed anything but tedious to the parties concerned. And if I linger over them, it is that I cannot bear to carry Beatrice past those bright days to the future darkening before her! I cannot bear to hurry her over that calm time when Montagu Treherne went out with the Brooke family (at twilight hours appropriated by the London world of fashion to dining in hot rooms, curtained with heavy draperies, and steaming with the mingled odours of savoury meats, perfumed fruits and choice wines) to see the Welsh harvesters dance in the open air; and sauntered home again along the shore, watching the tranquil moon throw soft strange gleams

over the darkening sea; and even then, instead of saying "Good evening," lingered and waited till instead of "Good evening," they all said "Good night."

I cannot bear to hurry past even the few stormy and wet days that came rather to vary than to mar their pleasures. Shut in the pleasant prison of the enchanting little "Home"— or in the well-furnished library-room at Lewellyn Lodge; or going out perhaps in a gleam of storm-sunlight to see the great fresh waves dash upon the shore, and the ships bend and dip their sails like sea-birds' wings in the tyrannous blast;—and then run up the well-known rocky stair from the sands beneath, with the rain dripping from the light waterproof cloaks and round hats of the girls, and the fresh cool bloom of colour deepening in their cheeks. Days when poor Beatrice thought that since the demigods of heathendom there surely never had been anything like Montagu seen upon earth; and Montagu, on his part, considered, that whether in her simple riding-habit, on her cream-coloured Hanoverian pony,— or in her little fishing-boots and short linsey-woolsey petticoat,— or in floating white muslin

dress and simply braided hair, or plain straw-hat, under the drooping shadow of whose brim her lovely eyes shone like sunlight from under a forest bough—he had never seen so enchanting a creature!

And most people would have been of Treherne's opinion. Beatrice was not only beautiful—not only had that nameless grace which goes by the name of "charm"—not only was she playful and coaxing (poor English synonymes for the French terms *caressante* and *folâtre*), but quick, ardent, and sensitive; capable of all sacrifice for those she loved; capable of all energy for that which she desired to attain; full of eagerness; full of enthusiasm; pitiful and tender.

Something of a rarer earnestness was in her than in others, and warmed you while she spoke, like a flame.

It is in vain to argue the matter: there is as much difference of sensation in different persons as there is difference in their physical strength or intellectual capacities. One can't draw,—another can't sing,—and a third *can't feel.* There are apathetic creatures to whom passionate love, wild grief, aching compassion, are mysteries as great

as magic. Disturbed; embarrassed; incredulous; with a strong repugnance to what they call "a scene,"—they shrink like sea-anemones, and draw in the cold flabby feelers of their minds at any evidence of emotion in others.

Beatrice was the reverse of all this. She enjoyed more, she suffered more, she felt more, than a great proportion of her fellow-creatures. Life thrilled through her, as you may see it thrill, in the delight of sunshine, through a butterfly's closed wings. And to such as she, in whom the visible world and the life of sensation predominate, the temptations of this world are the most powerful. Her heart ached, the tears rushed into her eyes, at some touching picture or some mournful song. The breath of a warm spring day, the scent of flowers, the purple of the distant hills, the freshness of the waves dashing in upon the shore, filled her with vague yearning.

With her gentle sister and loving father nothing of all this had been controlled; nor, with her joyous kindly pliant temper, did it seem to them that anything required controlling. They delighted in her,—as she in

them. She was the pet of The "Home." She had lived a shadowless life. Not even an illness had ever come to bring languor to that eager brow, or weakness to that alert and graceful form. Who can wonder with all this that Beatrice was merry? Merry she was, and witty too. When she and Aunt Dumpty and Helen Wollingham and Treherne chatted together at Lewellyn Lodge, what a joyous party it seemed! What a laugh Beatrice had! How Helen Wollingham loved it and echoed it; and sometimes paused and sighed, and wondered if her mother, Lady Eudocia, had ever been merry like Aunt Dumpty when she was younger; when she had not merely that undulation of the painted lips, which one of her children aptly called "mamma's company smile."

Beatrice was very accomplished too. Whatever she attempted, she did well. She played brilliantly; she sang to the little Welsh harp with the voice of a syren. She wrote excellent poetry; she composed music to her own words; she sketched from nature with a degree of skill many professed artists might have envied. And with all that, as she laughingly said of herself, "of so notable an industry" that the borders of

all the curtains in the little sunny drawing-room and dining-room of The "Home" were of her own tapestry work!

Such was Beatrice: and Owen was Beatrice turned into a boy. The same face, a little prouder and bolder; the same dark passionate eyes, with a certain dash of saucy merriment in them which his sister's had not; the same quick earnest glances, like the sun coming from under a suddenly-lifted forest bough; and the same free kindly temper and warm affections.

And Mariana? Mariana, in Maurice Lewellyn's opinion, was the paragon of that dear home. The tranquil Mariana, not the brilliant Beatrice. She too was beautiful, but it was the ideal of the face of a nun. Pure and quiet; with eyes that had something in them of the far-off shining of the stars, seeming while she bent them on you and listened to your discourse, as though they spared time from some inward abstract thought, which had nothing to do with you—nothing to do with earth. And with the saintly face went the saintly heart. Religion was the very essence of her being, the life within her life—not the religion of ecstasy, but the religion of peace. Per-

haps the dim remembrance of the stormy griefs that had surrounded her infancy, made her "cleave unto peace." It was an instinct with her. Often had she listened when Captain Brooke was talking of old campaigns with some companion, and thought of her poor mother, and the father she could not remember — wounded and dying! The fierce bayonets; the trampling cavalry; the burning villages; the bursting mines; the "diapason of the cannonade;" — the strife that made orphans and widows; the victories under whose standards of gorgeous tints the black crape fell in many a home that never more put on joy: — these pictures haunted her as though they had been, as old wives believe, the inheritance of her mother's thoughts ere yet she herself saw the light.

With deep tender attachment she loved her stepfather, and called him father, even as Beatrice did:

> For thou to me hast all the father been
> Except the name ——

was the grateful thought of her heart. Her life was spent in those careful charities which a narrow income does not make impossible where

there is a willing mind. Steady and unceasing was her personal attendance on the poor: not flinging tracts and warnings into their cottages, but coming to them in sickness and sorrow, gentle, patient, and consoling—"not disdaining," in the beautiful words of Dr. Guthrie, "to employ her feet in offices that have employed angels' wings."

Maurice Lewellyn had loved her ever since he was a boy; but he was awed by her. He had never yet put into words the dream of his life. Lately he had thought of it. His career was fixed; he had been called to the bar; not liking his father's profession, for which he was originally intended; and the image of that sweet calm face, not less holy as a wife and mother than now in its virgin grace, accompanied him in the hush of study and the busy outward life. He would ask her; he meant to ask her this very autumn, before he returned to London to his rooms in the temple.

For partings now were the order of the day! Lady Eudocia and all the Wollinghams except Helen, were already gone, and Helen was to follow with Aunt Dumpty when Sir Bertie went

to the Hague, where he had promised to go at the earnest request of his only brother, dying there of a painful complaint. Treherne had also departed. The lovely yacht in which so many pleasure-sailings had been made, was sent round to Plymouth with only her smart crew on board; and its owner was making a whole tour of autumn visits in Scotland.

He wrote Beatrice a letter. He wanted a song she and Mariana had sung together; and though indeed he might have got the song from a music-shop, or even from his Wollingham cousins who also sang it, these expedients did not seem to have occurred to him: so he wrote to Beatrice; and she copied the music with wonderful neatness, and wrote out the words like print, and fastened the sheets together with blue satin ties, and wrote a note with it; borrowing Owen's seal—a ship with "nihil negligendum" out of compliment to the memory of the vanished yacht—and sealed it carefully, and sent it off, feeling it quite an event to have written that letter!

And Treherne wrote a very amusing animated letter of thanks, describing some of the visits

he had paid, and narrating how many head of game he had killed; and he put a P.S. mentioning that he thought of taking Tenby "in his way back to London" — a route, the circuitousness of which he alluded to merely to comment on the extreme facility which the system of railways afforded in reducing distances to "nothing."

He did come. He did pay that visit. He learned that Captain Brooke might possibly be obliged to come to London in the spring, on account of the various perplexities which had arisen in the mining affairs, which were now alas! in the hands of law agents. He thought Beatrice more charming than ever, and she spoke of the certainty of their meeting in London with eager and unconcealed joy. So they parted; happy, and conscious of mutual love.

Not so Maurice Lewellyn and Mariana. He proposed indeed (which Treherne did not do), but Mariana rejected his suit: if, indeed, the term "rejection" can be applied to the calm gentleness of her denial: listening to which, Maurice felt as if in some sad dream he had been rowed away on a placid sea from some blessed shore which he

knew he might never see again. She spoke, as a much older woman might have done, of life and its duties; of her conviction that Captain Brooke was suffering from great and acute anxiety; so that, even had she loved Maurice, she would not have left her stepfather. But she felt for Maurice nothing of that love—nothing but the regard of a friend—a deep and true regard—nothing more. She did not think she ever would feel a different sort of love; she did not expect ever to marry. If she had been a Roman Catholic, as her mother was, she would have wished to enter some convent. As it was, God, who appointed to all their paths in life, had shown her where her duty lay. Her duty as she conceived it, was to remain with the man who had so tenderly fulfilled the vow of protection made to her dying father on the field of battle. To be a comfort to him, even if she could be no help. She ended by very earnestly entreating Maurice Lewellyn to take that decision as final; and not waste youth and hope in expectation of change in her views (as he proposed to do), but to look away from the past into the future, where he also had his tasks assigned; and strive to fulfil the hopes

his father and mother formed for him, of a career of usefulness and distinction. She gave him her hand as she spoke the last sentence; and for those few seconds they stood, as though they had been indeed plighting their troth. Plighting troth! ah, bitter moment: moment of sick shrinking of a heart thrown back on itself in all its manly earnestness of offering! As he stood there, pale and thrilled with that desperate pang, and looked in her calm face, full of all delicate strength and holy purpose, but empty—oh! empty of the love he had so yearned for—he felt that beneath their joined hands the gulf of a whole world divided their souls.

He went out from her presence, and wandered on the shore. Long, long he wandered, till the stars came out—the stars, so like her eyes—so pure, so cold, so far! He went home and entered softly into his mother's room. He wound his arms round her for the good-night embrace, he laid his cheek against hers, and as he did so he murmured, "Oh! mother, it is not to be!"

And she said in a tone of soft pity and anxious love, "Never, my Maurice?"

And he answered, "Never."

CHAPTER VII.

LONDON.

LONDON! Roaring, raging, rioting, racketty London; with its crowded streets, full of busy bees and idle drones—swarming, crawling, moving ceaselessly to and fro; in gay fashionable dresses, in labouring mechanics' suits, in dapper holiday attire, in squalid filthy rags. London, full of carriages, cabs, waggons, carts, drays, and loaded omnibuses; with drivers shouting, swearing, and flicking at the horses which, strong or feeble, quiet or restive, are to drag their vehicles clear through the apparently inextricable confusion of contradictory progress. London, with its practised beggars; halting on unnecessary crutches, peering from under blind eye-shades, compressing with mock bandages, sinewy healthy and

unmaimed limbs; whining for alms to spurious babes, hired for the day to stir the sluggish heart to pity! London, with its real misery, its real starvation, its back slums, and fœtid lodging-houses, its skeleton children playing by filthy sewers, or learning their apprenticeship to prison of experter thieves — its over-laboured needlewomen, its gaunt and pallid men "out of work"—its vice, its woe, and its wretchedness: its great bridges, spanning the fog-haunted river on whose disturbed and befouled waters tiny black steamers shoot hither and thither like insects of the beetle tribe; and where the cry of the drowning suicide is lost in the hum of gathered multitudes restlessly pursuing the pleasures or the business of life.

London, too, in its cheerier aspect: its handsome thriving shops, displaying so much of colour and light in their crystal frontages, that the dazzled eye feels as though it had been looking through a kaleidoscope; its parks and squares, where liveried equipages whirl with such wondrous speed that their painted wheels seem made of lines of coloured light: its theatres, shows, operas, and picture exhibitions; its restless effort to amuse itself all

night and all day — to make the best of the day, and to make the worst of the night. London, with its clubs like Italian palaces; its Houses of Lords and Commons like German churches; its public offices for Ministers of State, like very shabby paper manufactories; its Horseguards, with the huge mounted figures playing at sentries before the gates; its Whitehall, where a king's head fell at a subject's bidding; its St. James's, where,—on the same ground where once miserable lepers crawled and suffered, ladies now sweep their trains in hurried curtseys, going to court in feathers and diamonds.

London, with its Buckingham Palace, whose mean un-regal architecture makes us sigh with envy, remembering the glorious frontage of the Tuileries and the Louvre, which in Paris asserts that claim to royalty which makes it "every inch a palace," as Lear was every inch a king. London, with all its pealing bells,—memorable in the story of wayworn little Whittington,—making rejoicing music on highdays and holidays, and sending out a Sabbath summons over three square miles of ground: the largest, the richest, the busiest — and the ugliest—capital in Europe!

In the very heart of this "tumultuous and populous city" had Beatrice Brooke been residing for two months: the months of April and June. She arrived, blooming with health, bright with joy, in an ecstasy of eagerness and curiosity: health, which no degree of fatigue seemed capable of affecting; curiosity, which no variety of sight-seeing, or pleasure-seeking, appeared to satiate or allay. Since then, matters had taken another turn, and life was beginning to show itself in a different aspect.

In the first place (for what other feature of her position could compare in importance with that?) she did not see as much of Montagu Treherne as she expected. Very different, indeed, from their companionship at Tenby was their communion in London. He spent the Easter in one gay country-house, and the Whitsuntide at another; he was constantly engaged to dinners, to balls, to parties; he attended the debates in the House of Commons; he was fond of play, and a great frequenter of the Clubs.

And Milly Nesdale was in town!

The importance of which fact was not known to Beatrice for many a day afterwards, but it

nevertheless, influenced her present destiny. It is not so easy to get rid of your old love, in a society where the same people meet every day, belong to "the same set," and when your promotion in your profession and your parliamentary success may be damaged by weakening such ties.

Montagu Treherne had, indeed, no desire to break them. True, he was in love with Beatrice Brooke; but he had still nearly three years to wait before he could marry without consent of his guardians, or obtain an increased allowance to marry upon; and as to marrying "upon nothing," Montagu was not the sort of man to contemplate that possibility. One of Milly's uncles (or rather Lord Nesdale's uncle, for Milly herself was not highly connected) had great political influence, and Montagu was in the profession of diplomacy; another uncle was all powerful in the Yorkshire borough which the young M.P. represented. It must be admitted, too, that although Treherne was, as we have said, "in love" with Beatrice,—though he passionately admired her beauty, was amused with her conversation, and the echo of her rich voice, when she sang, seemed to thrill his whole

being,—yet he experienced in a degree, on her arrival in town, that strange *desillusionnement* peculiar to worldly persons, when the habits and tastes of those who are not "accustomed to the world" jar with theirs.

Not all Beatrice Brooke's beauty could blind him to the fact that, somehow or other, her dresses were neither the right width or length, nor even of the right material. He was positively annoyed, one day, at the thickness of her neat little boots, when walking in Kensington Gardens with the Wollingham girls. His eye rested on them perpetually. The existence of those boots gave a certain acrid turn to his conversation.

He thought her rage for sight-seeing positively childish and absurd. Still worse was her fondness for the theatres. Not all the glory of her soft glad eyes could diminish his discontent when she said to him, "We are going to the play again to-night—will you come?" Once, indeed, he rebelled utterly—instead of coming sauntering in towards the close of the entertainments, as he generally did. He had undertaken, at her request, to remind Lady Eudocia of a promise to get the Queen's box some night "when nobody else could

go"—some ball night. He asked late, and the box was already given; a fact he notified to Beatrice by letter. What was his amazement when going to call late in the day, he was informed by Beatrice, with one of her most radiant smiles, that they were "going to the play all the same."

"Going?"

"Yes; papa said if I was very much disappointed we might send and take places, and we did so. There is a ticket for you; we took five."

Treherne looked at Beatrice; he looked at the tickets. He gave a sort of discontented laugh, as he imaged himself escorting to the public boxes a party of ladies; and, finally, he said bluntly, "You really *can't* do these sort of things."

"What can't we do?"

"You can't go to the public boxes."

"But why?"

"Why—why? Because nobody does. You must be patient," added he, with a more good-humoured smile, as he looked in her face, "and wait till you can get a box lent you. I wish I could always 'lay one at your feet,' as the French call it; though it would be a sad encouragement of your taste for playgoing. And if you really

are so disappointed, I will go to Mitchell's and get these exchanged, and a box taken."

He did so. He came for half an hour during the performance, and then he went to the great ball of the evening; and Beatrice went home tired, and rather sad, she scarce knew why; but she felt that she and Treherne were somehow living in separate worlds.

Three balls had fallen to her share. One, Maurice Lewellyn provided. He wrote a kind note from his chambers in the Temple, saying that he did not go to balls himself, as he was working hard a the study of the law; but he hoped Mariana and Beatrice would go, the lady who gave it being an old friend of his mother's. One they were asked too, naturally, by a friend of Captain Brooke; and it was a pretty ball, in a handsome house, with a great deal of dancing and an excellent supper, but all blighted by the fact that Treherne was not there, as they were not in "that set" whose balls he frequented. And one ball Treherne himself had brought to pass—after about twenty battling notes and conversations, winding up with a threat on his part to stay away altogether if the Brookes were not asked.

That entertainment was indeed important, for it was the Soirée Dansante of the Marchioness of Updown!

The great grandiose card was brought, with "Captain Brooke and *one* Miss Brooke" written on it, which Treherne eagerly assured them was the usual, indeed the inevitable arrangement at all balls, to prevent a redundancy of young ladies. The brief consultation was held with Mariana as to a fitting toilette. And Beatrice made her first appearance in the world of fashion.

THE MARCHIONESS "received," in rooms so gloriously lighted, that Beatrice scarcely saw her stand glittering under the chandelier; spread, and perfumed, and gorgeously coloured, like an immense bouquet on the altar of a Roman Catholic shrine.

She made her pleased curtsey, poor child, in utter unconsciousness that the fat woman meant to be rude; though the Marchioness, (who had promised to ask her, to please Treherne, but had not promised to be civil) received simple Captain Brooke and his daughter with the stern stiffness of a French sergeant of police who is giving a "permission de circuler dans les appartemens;" an imperceptible

movement of the head, which did duty for a bow, and a sort of wave with her spangled fan at Treherne, as much as to say, "There are those people you desired me to invite; take them on, out of the way,"—being all the notice given them during the evening by the lady of the house.

But simple Captain Brooke dreamt of no discourtesy; and indeed was very comfortable, for he met one or two old Waterloo officers, whom he had formerly known, and who were glad to chat with him; and as to Beatrice, her pleasure knew no bounds. She danced with Treherne a quadrille, and a valse, and the cotillon; she danced with several other gentlemen whom Treherne and Helen Wollingham presented, and whose names she was too fluttered to hear, and never cared to remember; and once her father presented a gentleman to her; "General Pryce Perry, my dear." She remembered that name, partly because she thought it an odd one, and partly because, though he had but one arm, and was quite an old man, she thought she had never seen anyone so handsome or distinguished looking.

She watched with fond interest lovely Helen Wollingham flying through the waltz, dressed

entirely in white, with apple blossoms in her hair; and then she went into the room adjoining the ball-room with her father, and gazed on the beautiful Corregios, and Raphaels, and Canalettis, and Titians, which formed part of the wealth of the owners of the splendid house: and Treherne came and joined her there, and said rather uneasily though fondly,—"You must come and look at all these things some morning; they are better seen by daylight." For he considered there was something bizarre and unusual in Beatrice walking about as if she was at an exhibition; and in fine society no one ever looks at anything but the people who form the evening crowd.

Beyond this little flaw, however, in her conduct, he had no fault to find with Beatrice this evening. Her dress was perfect; she and Helen Wollingham had chosen it together — and if the rich coral circlet round her hair, the massy coral chain round her throat, and the heavy coral bracelets, seemed a little too matronly as ornaments (they had indeed been her mother's), they suited well with her Italian style of beauty, and did not "jar," even in Treherne's opinion, with the simplicity of her white dress.

A new face in the circle of London fashionables who meet every night at one house or another, is soon discerned; and Beatrice was much noticed and admired. "Who is that beautiful girl?" "I don't know; oh, a Miss Burke, or Brooke, or Broome, or something, a sort of cousin of the Wollinghams, I believe." This question and answer were often repeated in the course of the evening; and as she walked into the supper-room, leaning on Treherne's arm, he felt proud and contented, for when those already seated looked up at them, the whispers of admiration were again very audible.

As Treherne handed her into the carriage, she said—

"I am so glad to have seen Helen Wollingham in her ball dress. How beautiful, how very, very beautiful she looked!"

"If you could but know how beautiful you yourself looked, Beatrice," said Treherne. "Give me the red rose you wore—the 'rose of June'—I will keep it till I die."

Very passionately the young man spoke, and quick grew the pulse of the young girl's heart as

she took the rose from the corsage of her dress. She had her glove on,— but through the glove she felt, to her heart's core, the light hurried kiss which thanked the ready little hand; and soft on the breath of that June night already breaking into morning, came the waft of his perfumed hair, as the carriage door closed and they drove rapidly home.

General Pryce Perry stood on the steps at the entrance waiting till Lady Eudocia's carriage should be announced.

"I am doing duty for you, my dear boy, with your cousins," said the old soldier with rather a vexed smile.

"Is she not beautiful?" was all the answer made.

"Not so beautiful as Helen Wollingham."

"Yes, more beautiful! more lovely than Helen of Troy! and I shall go home and dream of her," said Montagu, gaily; "so good night!"

What happy dreams! Beatrice dreamed that she was already Treherne's wife, and was herself giving a great ball on the occasion of Helen Wollingham's marriage with a Venetian Doge,

whose portrait by Titian hung in the supper-room; and Treherne dreamed that he was Earl of Caërlaverock, and found nobody's consent but his own necessary to preface his union with the sweet giver of that rose of June.

CHAPTER VIII.

SISTERLY SISTERS.

To think that so pleasant an evening should be the root, cause, and up-bringer of a remarkably disagreeable morning! But so it was.

Early next day — early, considering how late they had all been up at the ball, and how late their habitual hours were,—Lady Eudocia Wollingham arrived at The Marchioness's door, and walked straight up to The Marchioness's dressing-room. She did this though she knew it was intolerable to her sister. She was too angry to think of what was intolerable, except to herself.

The Marchioness was still resting her luxuriant and luxurious form among the well-filled downy cushions of her large purple state-bed, when she was informed of this irruption into her domains. Great was the ire that rose in her mind, and

sparkled in her eye; and so loud the tones of her voice, that the equally angry visitor heard the bedroom colloquy with the maid.

"Your ladyship's sister,—Lady Eudocia wished—"

"I don't care what she wished. I forbid you to let any one enter my dressing-room, sister or no sister. I like Eudocia's insolence! I don't care if it was an angel from heaven, if I choose them not to be let in, you're not to let them in."

"Certainly not, my lady," said the alarmed abigail; "I wouldn't on any account. Shall I say your ladyship is too much fatigued?"

"Nonsense, stuff; she'll sit there an hour, waiting and poking among my things; but I tell you again, I don't care if it was an angel from heaven, I won't have it! Give me a dressing-gown; I'll give it Eudocia well!"

And ceasing to guard against the angelic visitants, the barring of whose highly improbable entrance was to exemplify her power, the Marchioness clothed, or semi-clothed, her corpulent form in a richly-worked and profusely-flounced white muslin negligée,—and hurriedly traversing her stately bedroom, entered the dressing-room

with an angry flourish, and flapped down into a causeuse with all her white flounces floating and subsiding with her, looking altogether like an incensed large white owl come to confront an angry falcon; a bird the more slender dowager very much resembled.

The two sisters clashed their hard handsome eyes at each other, but did not immediately speak; for Lady Eudocia was considering what to say, and the Marchioness was conscious of being out of breath with her rapid entrance and was also preoccupied with that vision of Eudocia "poking among her things," which she had so elegantly hinted at to her maid.

O Primavera, Gioventù dell' anno!
O Gioventù, primavera della vita!

So sings the Italian bard.

O Gioventù!— it is the subject of more regrets than all other losses on this earth. No wonder then if there should be found heroic souls who are determined practically to resist its departure; fearless ladies, who undertake a wrestling match with old Time; nimbly evading the sweep of his scythe, and victoriously resolving

to die withered buds, and never to become faded flowers!

How they do this is supposed to be a secret. By burning sulphur under a garden rose, you can turn it to a sallow white; and a young Jewess, who last year complained in a police court of the seizure of her stock of cosmetics, amazed the magistrate by declaring she could restore bloom to the most faded cheek by the application of "drab powder."

The chemist's shop is the storehouse of the modern Medea; and we know that part of the success in these cases depends on the privacy of method. For when the real Medea undertook to restore youth to Jason's tottering old father,—and on the principle of "ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte," had proceeded to cut him up and put him in a barrel,—we learn that the failure of the experiment arose from no want of skill on her part, but from the too impatient curiosity which prompted some doubter to disturb the process; "whereupon there came out only the form of a little child, which fled and disappeared," instead of a stately man in the prime of life!

Now, of this principle of secrecy, the Marchioness was a staunch upholder. She was not

so handsome as her sisters, but she had more "fraicheur," and she was proud of it, and cherished it, and preserved it; how,— the angels whose possible intrusion she so protested against, might know, but we never shall; nor did she choose that even her sister should; and she now sent a suspicious glance to the cumbered toilette-table, with all its manifold treasures of crystal, and gold, and china. Lady Eudocia's eye followed the glance, and understood it. "Oh!" she said, contemptuously, "you needn't be afraid. I haven't been interfering with your pots and pigments; I've too much real anxiety, I can tell you, for such a waste of time."

"Your real anxieties don't seem to have prevented your attending to your own toilette this morning," said the Marchioness, with a sneering and emphasised glance at the roseate bloom on her sister's cheeks.

"They have at least brought me out earlier in the day than you seem able to get out of bed; which habit of yours is what makes you the size you are."

"Thank you. And as I *am* up at last, and going to dress, I shall be obliged by knowing what has brought you here at this hour?"

"Letitia, you know perfectly well what has brought me — regard for the interests of the girls has brought me — I have a right to come and remonstrate with you, after last night's proceedings."

"I don't know what you mean."

"Don't provoke me! You have no girls of your own, but you might have some regard for mine, as your nieces; and, above all, some regard for the prospects of our whole family, which you, of all people, set up to compromise, by encouraging Montagu to flirt with a Nobody-knows-who! Where was Milly Nesdale, that she was not at your ball last night?"

"I left her out. I never mean to ask her again; she has been extremely impertinent. The very day I set apart for my reception, she took the French ambassador and the Prussian minister to dine at Greenwich, and sent the most insolently careless excuse, saying they were all 'en frac' and 'en chapeau,' and so thought best on their return to drink tea at her house. Little minx!"

"Leave out whom you please, but don't ask people out of spite. How did you ever come to know the Brookes? I am sure I avoided, carefully

enough, proposing to introduce them, though my sister Dumpty's folly and Helen's fanciful ways encouraged them this year to thrust themselves upon me at Tenby."

"I have no sort of acquaintance with them. It was Montagu made a point of their being asked."

"There! there, you own it, you treacherous creature; siding against your own flesh and blood! I wish you may find it answer to you, the hot water you will get into with my uncle Caërlaverock, when he learns your intrigue in favour of such a marriage."

"Don't use such language to me; I don't know what you are at. I desire you will leave my house, and not stay bullying me at this hour of the morning about nothing at all."

"Nothing at all! oh! yes, nothing at all in *your* eyes,—your intense selfishness makes other people's destinies, even that of your own nieces, of no sort of importance in your opinion."

"I'll tell you what, Eudocia, I'll never ask your girls again to this house, so long as you live, or they live; and I'll ask who I like to my own balls. You'll not marry Montagu by force, I

suppose, to one of your girls, and I'm sure *I* don't care who he marries."

"Of course you don't. You'd be glad he married any one but one of my girls. You can't bear to think that you haven't one of your own to marry him to."

"Leave my house, I tell you, Eudocia! Leave my house! I only hope, just to punish you, that Montagu may do something extremely silly; and as to my uncle Caërlaverock, I don't care *that* for him."

With a snap of the fat white fingers covered with turquoise and diamond rings, and a flouncing shake to all the embroidered frilling of the owlish feathery dressing-gown, the thoroughly exasperated marchioness rose, and giving a passionate and prolonged tingle to the blue Sévres hand-bell which stood on her dressing-table, and a brief snorting command to her maid to "let Lady Eudocia's carriage be called," she flapped into the purple bedroom again, and slammed the door in her sister's face, to show that the conference was ended.

Perhaps Lady Eudocia, as she stood alone, also trembling with anger, thought she would

have done better to have spoken more gently; perhaps not; for people who have no habitual self-government, have very little of what the French call a "retour sur eux-mêmes," and gentle or cross, she had the deepest (and truest) conviction that it was a matter of indifference to the prosperous, childless, self-centred marchioness, what became of any one member of her family, or any individual of her acquaintance, so long as she, the Marchioness of Updown, ate her good dinner off her gold and silver plate, slept unmolested in her purple silk bed, and drove out untroubled in her brilliantly liveried carriage.

The marchioness, on the other hand, who felt in her conscience (if she had a conscience), that she had never given a thought to Treherne's reason for wishing Captain Brooke asked — not even when she saw the handsome girl who merely realised to her the condescending words, "ONE Miss Brooke" inscribed on her invitation card — the marchioness, aware that her sluggish indifference to everybody's happiness could not have been transformed to interest, if she had been ever so much desired as an ally of her nephew, — was as outraged, as all such martyrs

are, at her sister's injustice. She had a headache, too, after that angry colloquy, and the sudden getting out of bed: a headache, which even the camphor and salvolatile administered by the trembling Abigail would not take away.

The idea of her having a headache, because Eudocia had the insolence to come and scold her in her own dressing-room about things she never thought of! It was enough to make a breach between them for life. And as to Helen Wollingham,—though she, poor beautiful child, had done nothing to offend anyone,—fierce were the secret determinations of the Marchioness never to invite her, or help her to any of the little radiant pleasures of girlhood again.

Almost she had resolved to do, what she had not the least intended till after that stormy interview,—really to take Beatrice into notice, and invite her, and *prôner* her; but this was prevented by untoward circumstances which, the night of that very ball, were gathering to crush Captain Brooke, though he knew it not.

CHAPTER IX.

EXPERIENCE *versus* INEXPERIENCE.

LADY EUDOCIA had not begun by being rude or unkind to Beatrice in London. On the contrary, her beautiful voice agreeing well with Helen Wollingham's in all their duets, and her gentle sprightly amusing talk, having a visible effect on the spirits of the delicate affectionate girl whose health had given so much anxiety, she bent her mind to Sir Bertie Lewellyn's advice to "let the two young friends be a little together." To his advice, as a sort of curative process, rather even than as a yielding to her daughter's playfully-worded but earnestly urged petitions.

"Oh mamma, *do* let Beatrice come often to see us! I assure you, when she goes, — or there are many days together that I don't see her,—I feel as if there were a sort of fading and silence in

the house. I am quite sure I change colour, and become a dull grey, like a chameleon taken off the green grass and put down upon brown gravel."

So Helen Wollingham was allowed sometimes to call for Beatrice in the open carriage; and they walked together, and sang together, and lunched together; and three or four times Lady Eudocia had even taken them together to the opera, when they were learning of Marras duets which they could there hear sung in the greatest perfection.

Those operas! Alas! it was one of those very evenings at the opera that did all the mischief. Of all the pleasures so eagerly enjoyed by the all-enjoying spirit that lived in Beatrice Brooke, this going to the opera was the greatest. It was her chief delight; and she was to pay for it, as we often have to do for our chief delights, with bitter pain.

They were sitting in Lady Eudocia's roomy and comfortable box; the opera was the "Sonnambula," and the *divertissement* was being danced. An elderly Miss Wollingham, niece to Lady Eudocia's husband, had her glass to her eyes.

"There is that dancer that Montagu used to admire so much," said she.

"Where?" said Beatrice wonderingly.

"There, with fair hair, lifting the garland over her head—close to the footlights."

"And did she fall in love with him?" asked Beatrice, fixing her eyes on the dancer.

The elderly girl laughed.

"I really don't know," she said. "I suppose, like most of those young ladies, she cared less about him than about the gewgaws he gave her."

"But I wonder she cared for his presents if she did not care about him," said Beatrice, with the gravest simplicity.

"Well, there sits his present admiration, which is a step towards better taste," rejoined Miss Wollingham. This time Beatrice turned quite round to her companion.

"Who do you mean?" she said.

"Lady Nesdale — Milly Nesdale — there — no, not quite opposite, but in that box in the bend of the house, — very prettily dressed, with a strange and pretty wreath; don't you see her? She is talking very eagerly to some gentlemen — to the French ambassador and some other foreigner."

"My dear Catherine, I have repeatedly told

you that all these gossipings are in the worst possible taste," said Lady Eudocia severely, "and I do not desire my girls to hear them."

The *morality* of the remarks was not in Lady Eudocia's mind: only the "bad taste," and the possible prejudice against Montagu in Helen's mind, whom she perpetually represented to herself as the future Countess of Caërlaverock. The speaker was silenced, and a good deal affronted, which she showed by putting up her lip with a sneer. But Lady Eudocia did not observe her. A gleam of intelligence, as to something else, occupied that acute mind.

She was watching Beatrice.

As she sat in the shade at the back of the opera box, she scrutinized—in the full glare of light—the beautiful changeful face, that needed not those cold glittering eyes which for fifty years had looked on the glittering world of fashion, to read its thoughts,—but could be read by a child. She saw the restless glances pursuing *that one dancer* through all the mazes of the dance; the anxious absent expression during the singing of music that had lately been listened to with such eagerness; the sorrowful tremble of Beatrice's lip

and the moisture of unshed tears in her eyes, when the "Son geloso" was heard,—plaintive and perfect both in words and music; and finally she saw the start when, having entered the box unheard, Montagu Treherne spoke to Beatrice, and the look of shy imploring love with which she turned towards him, as though appealing to him against the unknown accusation made in his absence.

Lady Eudocia perceived that from that moment it was not the opera that occupied Beatrice, but Treherne. She heard the impatient sighs that came from that innocent heart, when his eyes were directed either to the stage or to Lady Nesdale. She saw that when he went to pay his visit to that other box Beatrice grew positively pale,—and twice she said to her—

"I fear, my dear, you are not well to-night, or you are tired, would you like to go?"—before, with a rush of crimson to her cheek, Beatrice heard and answered—answered with more even than her usual eagerness—

"Oh no, do not let us go! I am not tired; I was thinking. Pray do not go."

Finally the wily chaperone saw the unquiet eyes come back to radiant peace,—when, from Milly

Nesdale's box, crowded as it was with diplomats and adorers, Montagu Treherne returned to theirs, and gave his arm to Beatrice down the corridor and through the round room, leaving his cousin Helen to the handsome attaché of the Austrian embassy, and the other two ladies to the chance courtesy of mutual acquaintance.

Lady Eudocia never took Beatrice to the opera again.

CHAPTER X.

AMONG THE QUICKSANDS.

THE morning after the ball, which had produced so stormy an interview between the inimical sisters, Beatrice went early to her friend Helen Wollingham. She had walked from the lodgings in Spring Gardens to their house in Grosvenor Square. As she untied the strings of her bonnet, Helen could not help saying with a sigh, "How I envy you your health, Beatrice! I feel ready to die with the fatigue of last night, though I danced very few dances, and have only this moment breakfasted. As to dressing, I put it off till I dress for dinner. And here are you as bright as a sunbeam, not the least tired, though you have walked here."

"Oh, not the least tired!" said Beatrice, in the clear glad tone which tells so much of an

inward spring of happiness. She was in that condition of mind described by Emile Souvestre, in which he says of the heroine of his "Riche et Pauvre" "Comme elle se leva fraîche et reposée de cette nuit sans sommeil!" Joy was in every fibre of her frame, like the sap of life in a tree in spring.

"Well, at least you have nothing to do *but* to rest," resumed she, as she sat down by Helen's sofa; "which is more than can be said for Mariana and me — only my dear Mariana does all my household tasks for me. We have but one servant besides the lodging-house maid. Now contrast that with your way of living!" And she laughed merrily. Helen sighed.

"Do you know, Beatrice, this luxury, which you admire, is not valued by me, as perhaps in thankfulness it ought to be. I do not mean that I should like a busy painstaking life; I am not fit for it: but I should like a quiet life, a life with companions, and not with mere 'society.'"

"Well, let me be one of the companions!" said Beatrice gaily; "But indeed your luxury is beyond what is usual. Now, only count your servants! I sometimes wonder what work they can

possibly find to divide among them. Count them. There is, to begin, the hall porter, whose business is, I believe, to shut me out, for he was a most reluctant Cerberus to-day."

"Well, that is better than the Marchioness of Updown's porter. Count Freiligrath called on her the other day; and being a stranger and a foreigner, I suppose Cerberus thought he *must* be some one with a petition; and the Marchioness is like the 'young courtier' in the old ballad, who 'relieved the poor with a thump on the back with a stone.' So the porter scrutinised the visitor from head to foot; took out his list of who were to be admitted; read it through, half aloud; and not finding the name of Freiligrath set down in that sacred band, folded it and said, 'No, sir; the Marchioness is NOT at home.'"

"So much for the hall porter's duty. Then you have ——"

"Well, then we have a groom of the chambers, who is *my* favourite," laughed Helen,—"because I am very sick and languid and lazy, and *his* duty is to see that all the nosegays are fresh,—and all the flowers and shrubs changed when out of blossom,—and pens and ink and paper on all the

writing tables, — and the newspapers laid ready, and the invitations recollected (I wish he 'd forget to remind mamma sometimes), — and many more labours I cannot name — not quite as terrible as those of Hercules, but very necessary in mamma's opinion."

"And a butler, and his under-butlers and his steward-room boys," counted Beatrice on her white fingers.

"Well, dear, yes; that is to take care of us and our Plate. I should say our Plate and us,—for I am quite sure all my 'golden hair,' which you are so fond of praising, is not to be compared in the mind of our good old Jarvis with the value of the racing cups; and that if I were to be executed for treason, and my head rolled from the block on the scaffold, it would not seem so horrible to him as a robbery in that lion's den, his plate-room!"

"Still, we are far from the condition of the Duc d'Albuquerque in M^de. d'Aulnois's letters from Spain, the list of whose gol and silver plate it took six weeks to write out, at the rate of two hours a day. Count *that*, Beatrice! or read about it. I know there were fourteen hundred dozen plates, five hundred big dishes, seven

hundred smaller dishes, and all the rest in proportion; besides forty silver shelves to place things on at his sideboard, which was made in graduated steps like an altar. Then we hear of the Duke d'Alba, who didn't consider himself rich, but nevertheless had six hundred dozen silver plates and eight hundred dishes. It is true M. d'Aulnois laughs a little at these 'Grands d'Espagne' (who after all were neither hospitable nor comfortable), for she says, slily, 'So many silver dishes were unnecessary, only to set on table two eggs and a roast pigeon!'"

"Ah, Helen! but you *are* hospitable and comfortable," said Beatrice with rather a repining sigh, as she looked round the fresh and beautiful room, which certainly in its arrangement did all credit to the groom of the chambers; "and you have a hundred more slaves of the lamp in this Aladdin's palace."

"Not a hundred, but a great number certainly," said Helen thoughtfully. "It is—it must be—to you, dear Beatrice, with your paucity of attendance, a most curious reflection, the quantity of persons whose sole occupation is to minister to the wants and amusements of one family."

"No, *that* goes on in all trades, and all over the world, Helen; but the *comfort* of luxury is what strikes me. The three ladies' maids all plaiting and sleeking that hair (I beg pardon for praising it)—yours and your pretty sisters—and the footmen who seem only to go about gaily dressed, jumping down to knock at doors, and open carriages—and the train of tidy housemaids and kitchenmaids, and grooms and coachmen, and the joy and delight of having only to ring the bell such a day as this and order the open carriage."

They were still chatting merrily when Lady Eudocia entered her daughter's room, fresh from the battle with the Marchioness. She looked at Beatrice with ill-concealed irritation.

"I do not think it is good for Helen to see people to-day," she said; "she is not strong enough: she should keep quiet after the ball. The carriage can take you home, Miss Brooke, before it puts up. Good-bye."

Beatrice saw the displeasure; she reproached herself; she attributed the coldness of Lady Eudocia's manner to real anxiety about Helen's health; and thought how selfish she had been in coming. Poor Beatrice!

She was set down at the door of Spring Gardens. As she entered, the very face of the servant and of the landlady, who peeped out of the parlour at the sound of the wild and imperious double knock given by one of the two tall footmen of the Wollingham family coach, told her that something unusual had occurred. For an instant she paused; she had almost given way to the impulse which prompted her to ask, "What is the matter?" of the landlady,—who curtseyed, and drew back into the parlour.

Beatrice flew up stairs into the little drawing-room, to her sister; to Mariana, whom she always found bending over some book or delicate embroidery, pale and placid. Mariana was not seated at her book or work; she was standing in the centre of the small room looking towards the door, and expecting Beatrice, whose return she had heard. "Oh! what has happened?" What *can* have happened, that tranquil Mariana folds her arms so closely round her sister, and bursts into such a flood of tears. Mariana!

What has happened? The Father—the dear Father; he has been arrested and taken away. The speculations in which he had shares are a

bubble and a cheat. The men with whom he had to do are swindlers and rogues. He only of the set was not "a man of straw;" he only can, by forfeit of his all, be made to pay some puny dividend towards satisfying the huge debt, the crash of which is startling people right and left, stripping others, some of little and some of much, and giving all indiscriminately a right to curse and abuse Captain Brooke as one of that group of reckless men who brought them to this ruin!

He was gone to prison, that gallant old officer, for other men's misdeeds, and his own imprudence. In vain had he trudged from Spring Gardens to the Temple every morning, hurrying through the crowded Strand, hoping that by dint of lawyers, "Matters would be set to rights." Nothing could ever come right again. He was a beggared bankrupt! His pleasant little cottage at Tenby; his measured hospitality to the one friend or tourist casually picked up, and cheerily welcomed; his charities to the poor fishermen, his winter doles and summer employment, to which they looked for succour in their need; his children's prospects, his local importance, and the respect in which they were all held in that

little seaport neighbourhood which made his World,—all was shattered and gone! He was disgraced and bankrupt, and carried off to the Queen's Bench, with the war medals won by bravery in his portmanteau; with the dreams of past glory to balance the new black dream of disgrace, and a wringing of the heart when he thought of his midshipman son at sea!

To Beatrice, the news came as a clap of thunder. Even to patient watchful Mariana he had said nothing; once only he had alluded to the situation of their lodging as very noisy for the girls, but that he had taken it to be within easy distance of "business" in the Strand; and once, with a sigh, he had recommended rigid economy in their little household, adding with an anxious smile, "We never were very rich, and we may be very poor before long." That was all; yet Mariana had foreseen enough to break the blow when it came. Beatrice had foreseen nothing.

Bitter was that evening of weeping to her, and bitter also to Mariana; and bitter the days that followed, when Mariana was much with Captain Brooke in the daytime, copying letters and papers, and helping in any way she could, leaving to

Beatrice the pleasanter share of toil, of seeing people at home on business, and of agreeing with Maurice Lewellyn who should be communicated with, and how, on this disastrous state of things.

For many days, for more than a fortnight, in spite of what had passed between them, Beatrice did not see Montagu Treherne. The "esclandre" of Captain Brooke's position, and the breaking up of the bubble company in which he was a director, was news that flew with the wild-fire rapidity usual in London. Lady Eudocia took that opportunity to forbid her girls ever to see more of the Brookes—"a parcel of adventurers and adventuresses." Lady Diana Lewellyn, who would have been more generous, was at the Hague with her husband. The Marchioness, having quarrelled with her sister about Beatrice, now quarrelled with Treherne for having created the possibility of people marking who Captain Brooke was, by saying, "Oh, yes, you know, father of that extraordinarily handsome girl who came out at Lady Updown's last ball." She and Eudocia made a fierce reconciliation on the strength of the Brooke downfall; and Treherne, angry with his aunt, discontented with the event,

feeling utterly committed with regard to Beatrice, and yet true to the instincts of the race he came of, which ever held SELF as paramount above all other considerations,— took the opportunity of a week's run over to Paris; partly on some racing business, but principally to give himself time to consider how he could act, in the disastrous position of his true love's family, and the open blaze of wrath in his own.

The week became nearly a fortnight before he saw Beatrice again. She was not at home the first day he called, and he merely wrote on his card that he hoped to find her next time. She sat at home, poor Beatrice, lest she should miss him, from that hour till he called again; but he could not know that fact.

After the first agitated moment of their meeting, both tried to be as usual; he, that their relations might not alter till he had made up his mind exactly what to do; and she that he might not think she was cast down, or believed in her father's fault, or appealed in any way for more affection or compassion than before. But all her courage and all her pains could not keep her soul from shining through her

eyes; and their wearied wistful look haunted Treherne incessantly as he walked to and from his club; sat restlessly through unheard debates in the Commons; dined at brilliantly lighted tables on engagements of a month's standing; or drove to the sunny "breakfasts" given at Richmond or Wimbledon.

That girl! that Rose of June, fading in her hot little lodging—he could not forget her.

CHAPTER XI.

SUMMER FRIENDS.

BEATRICE was indeed very miserable, and beginning to feel very ill. A lodging in Spring Gardens sounds airy enough; but when that lodging is on the Charing Cross side of Spring Gardens, and the tiny hot room looks up the Strand across the whirl of carriages and the inmate seldom gets out, it is very trying.

Beatrice was "country bred." Even in her joyful phase, she had felt the confinement of London. With all her daily pleasures and walks, and occasional drives with the Wollinghams, it had somewhat fevered and oppressed her. Now she felt stifled. The July days, with their oppressive city odours,—the vainly open window that only brought in dust, and the reeking of hot harness, and the smell of bruised fruit, with the

shrill cries of those who sold it,—the ceaseless sound of passing feet, and whirling wheels,—all this made her sick. She could not eat; she could not sleep; her passionate fanciful nature, so dependent on external things for pleasure, revolted as if she had been suddenly shut up in prison.

And then she thought of her father, and wept; and her heart ached and burned, as only young hearts can burn, with vain indignation against those who had so cheated him: with helpless wrath against the injustice of those who dared to blame him. The newspapers were rife with comments on the bubble scheme. All was comfortless!

At first Beatrice did not "realise" her position with the Wollinghams. On one of the first of those sultry July afternoons, she rose from her desk, put on her bonnet, and resolved to walk to Grosvenor Square.

She felt restless and anxious; she thought perhaps Helen was ill, or the family unwilling to disturb Mariana and herself in their first trouble; they were scarcely intimate enough for sympathy. She longed to see Helen; to see

all those beautiful golden-haired girls, so elegant, so perfectly dressed, and so courteous. She longed to sit in that great, fresh, shaded, cool drawing-room; redolent of flowers and moss from the well-filled gilt latticed-baskets in all the windows. To sit there, if only for half an hour, instead of sitting in that sultry little room at Charing Cross.

There was no one to accompany her; they had no servant now. She walked alone. The porter said the ladies were "at home," but as the footman who ushered her up stairs pronounced her name, Beatrice heard Lady Eudocia repeat in a tone of the severest astonishment, "*Miss Brooke!*" and "Oh! hush, dear mamma," from Helen, as if to seal the significance of the exclamation.

She felt embarrassed and confused; already flushed and wearied with her walk, nothing but a proud courage prevented her bursting into tears. The visit was silent and constrained; no one proposed, as formerly, that she should take off her bonnet and sing some duets: no one, except Helen, volunteered to talk. The "waiting for her to go" was only too evident!

She rose, after a brief stay, to take leave;

and then for the first time Lady Eudocia (who had been sedulously reading the "Morning Post") addressed her.

"How did you come here? I mean, who with?"

"I came alone: I walked here by myself."

"You walked alone! Well, I do really think! Sara! ring the bell."

A dead pause ensued: Beatrice did not look up, till she heard Helen sigh,—and then her lifted eyes met Helen's sorrowfully fixed on her for a moment, and tearfully withdrawn.

The footman answered the bell. "Desire John to see Miss Brooke home; and do recollect that you are to admit NO ONE, without first bringing me up the cards."

Scarcely rested in body,—outraged in mind,—and feeling as if she were being marched home in custody, with the tall footman behind her,—Beatrice reached her hot lodgings again. She strove to bear her depression, and occupy herself. She thought of Mariana's noble, calm, and enduring patience: but natures are different; and Beatrice broke down and wept.

She had a little comfort in the evening, for Maurice Lewellyn called, and spoke kindly and

cheeringly to her. He did not stay long; he could not; but before he went, he showed her a note from Helen Wollingham to himself: it said, "Now that your mother, my good aunt Dumpty, is at the Hague, and our town life so restless—I do not see much of the very people I wish to see most of. I am very anxious about Beatrice Brooke; will you spare time now and then to tell me about her? I send her a nosegay by you."

The longest explanation could not have told Beatrice more plainly than these few simple lines—that she was to see no more of the Wollinghams, but that Helen would love and remember her! She kissed the great white roses in the nosegay Helen sent. They reminded her of home, and of joyous days.

It was impossible for Treherne to be ignorant of this state of things. Easy was it to cross-examine poor Beatrice; he was welcome to every thought of her heart; and not difficult to cross-examine Helen Wollingham, who, though she forbore venturing even implied blame of her mother, thought that all could be said to help sympathy from other friends, was fair.

From other friends? Well—from Treherne.

If Helen Wollingham did guess that Beatrice and Treherne liked each other; that Beatrice had a warm loving heart, and Treherne a selfish one; she only guessed what was true.

Montagu's anger against his aunts increased tenfold; and when day by day Beatrice became paler and more languid, he openly expressed his opinion of their unkindness.

If ever there was a time when a few invitations to be with Eudocia's girls — a few drives in the open carriage—a few little offerings of grapes and other fruits — a few of the small courtesies which would have cost them nothing, would have been grateful and pleasant, it was now, in this detestable July weather.

And Lady Eudocia answered, with one of her fierce glittering smiles, that she would have been most happy to have improved her acquaintance with the Brookes, had the daughter seemed more discreet, and the father under no awkward imputation as to honesty; but that she could not approve of young ladies who strolled all over London without any chaperon, or of men who mixed themselves in speculations which brought them within the power of the law.

She could not cultivate such acquaintances, *for the sake of her girls.* She was obliged to be particular; more particular than the Marchioness. But of course Treherne could continue to visit them. Gentlemen could visit anywhere. Ladies could not.

It is an old proverb that "you may strain a cord till it break:" and Treherne, who had readily winced under sneers not one tithe as bitter, and been tormented by little *unworldly-isms* in Beatrice's dress and ways when she first came to town, felt his whole soul stung with rebellious exasperation at this speech. He was as wilful as the rest of his family, and every day more "in love" with Beatrice. He therefore came to a sudden resolution, even while pausing in his aunt's drawing-room, smoothing the nap of his hat, as he rose to go away. Something of her own mocking smile was in his handsome young face, as he said, "Very well; I must see if I can find friends who are more obliging," and so departed.

CHAPTER XII.

FRIENDS WHO EXPECT THE QUID PRO QUO.

THE well-appointed cab in which Treherne left his aunt's door, took a rapid whirling course to a less fashionable locality, and stopped at a handsome house in Russell Square, belonging to a gentleman of the name of Grey, the solicitor to Treherne's family. Law business, however, did not appear to be the young lover's object; for he desired the groom to ask "if Mrs. Myra Grey was at home," and, receiving an answer in the affirmative, jumped lightly out of the cab, and very nimbly ascended the stairs which led to that lady's drawing-room.

"I am come to ask a favour," he said, before the servant had shut the door; and the countenance of the lady certainly did not threaten any

refusal, whatever the favour might be. Indeed, before the expiration of his brief visit (which lasted less than a quarter of an hour), Treherne took both the lady's hands in his own with graceful and cordial thanks, and told her with one of his most winning smiles, that if all that remained to do was that she should "get Mr. Grey's consent on his return home," he looked on the business as settled.

So did Mrs. Myra Grey: and she lifted her dark languid eyes with an answering smile, as though admitting the implied compliment to her power, and shook hands again with her young visitor as she accompanied him to the drawing-room door.

Very dark, very languid eyes they were; and set, those dark jewels, in what had been a very beautiful face; in spite of the unmistakable trace of Indian blood, for Mrs. Myra Grey was the daughter of one of our Indian magistrates, and her mother was a Hindoo. Nor was her history altogether uninteresting to Treherne's family. Married at a very early age to the Collector of Customs at Burrumpootra, she attracted the

notice of the Governor of the Presidency, the Honourable Pierrepoint Treherne, the very same who was now Earl of Caërlaverock; and his notice of her attracted the notice of all who had an opportunity of witnessing it. She was not ashamed of that notice; she was proud of it. She boasted, in her pretty way, that she made the governor do kindnesses to her "good old man," as she called her husband; and she spoke of herself as a "foolish child." She took bribes from the native litigants under pretence of influencing decisions. Her good old man's health failed in the very zenith of his favour at Government house. He could not tell what ailed him; he had been a fine robust man, though no longer in the prime of life. His whole constitution seemed shaken; his eyes grew very weak; his digestion failed; a perpetual tremor tormented him. It was settled he should go into the hill country for a short time, to recruit.

Sir Bertie Lewellyn, then a very young man, beginning medical life as resident doctor at Government House, came to see the Collector before he went. He wished him to take some relative or friend with him besides his "inexperienced

wife." He pressed this point very much — quite obstinately; and, while he did so, the watchful eyes of the Hindoo, who never left her husband alone during the interview, glanced at him with a sinister augury.

She was sitting by the couch on which the sick man was reclining, doing nothing—looking at her bracelets; and, while the Doctor spoke, she laid her little dark hand with caressing playfulness on the invalid's damp bleached forehead.

"You think I cannot nurse my old man, you unwise Doctor?" she said. "I nurse him better than your big English nurses. I step more softly to his bedside."

And her old man, fondly lifting the little hand from his brow, said, with a faint laugh—

"My dear sir, I'd rather be poisoned by a mistake of this little hand than nursed by any other."

Then those Hindoo eyes and Lewellyn's met for a moment, — and it was without surprise, though with a painful conscious feeling, that Sir Bertie heard soon afterwards that the residence in the more bracing mountain air had failed to strengthen the patient.

The Collector was dead, in that out-of-the-way place; and the "foolish child" came back a widow.

Lewellyn saw her on her return. She wore English mourning—widow's weeds—but the cruel Hindoo eyes wore a look of satisfaction that ill accorded with that garb of woe; and there was a look of sleek, quiet, cat-like defiance in them, while Lewellyn questioned her respecting the last symptoms of the deceased, which confirmed all the evil impressions with which the doctor's mind had been haunted.

Soon it became whispered in the Presidency that the English Governor actually thought of marrying Myra. She had felt too sure of her power to conceal with any decent care this great object of her ambition,—the rather as her elder sister had actually married an English officer of distinction,—and it grew into a public report. But in this hope she was baffled. The Governor, on the contrary, strenuously advised her to go to her husband's English friends; who, poor souls, had written letter after letter offering to befriend "the devoted little creature who had soothed the last moments of their dear John."

He added to the pension she would receive as a widow, three hundred a year from the munificence of his private purse, "out of regard to the memory of a most useful public servant." He ordered his aide-de-camp to see that the cabin of the ship in which she took passage was most comfortably arranged, and he bade her good-bye in the tenderest manner compatible with the circumstances of the case, attended as he was during that touching adieu by several of his staff. He furnished her with very exigent instructions to the family solicitor to take the greatest care of her interests and see to the payment of her income: and then Myra left India,—carrying with her the child of her sister who had died in the interim, and whose father thought he could not do better than avail himself of this opportunity: and carrying also with her the burning memory of Dr. Lewellyn's stern contemplative face, as he stood by the Governor's side to "see her off."

For there was, between those two, what exists between many persons, even in our workaday prosaic life: — the consciousness of unspoken accusation; the conviction of undetected crime. Dr. Lewellyn was of opinion that slow poison

had been administered to the Collector of Burrumpootra; and Myra was convinced that he did think so, and also that it was he who had prevented her marriage with the Honourable Pierrepoint Treherne.

When that gentleman's solicitor saw the young and beautiful Hindoo widow, he was greatly struck with her; and after a brief acquaintance proposed for her. Myra was disposed to be very scornful at first; but finding her position in England a very obscure and forlorn one,—that her deceased husband's relations seemed disappointed in her,—and that no one except Mr. Grey seemed at all inclined to waste time visiting her and her little niece, — she thought better of it and married her new friend.

The Indian child shot beyond her aunt in her fortunes, having captivated Lord Nesdale, and become the identical "Milly Nesdale" alluded to in this story. Indeed, the very name of "Milly" proceeded from this relationship, for both aunt and niece being christened Myra, it was necessary to make some distinction; so little Myra was called "Milly," and the original Myra, in an affected and foreign manner, added her own

name to her husband's, and printed her fragile glazed cards —

Mrs. Myra Grey.

She kept up a certain acquaintance with all the Treherne family, and to Montagu was apt to speak of herself with a little affected sigh, as "a sort of aunt." She held a different tone with Mr. Grey, — who received, he scarcely knew how, the impression that Pierrepoint Treherne (not generally benevolent) had exercised the most grand-fatherly tenderness to the helpless and infantile widow, and had received most important political aid from information given by the deceased Collector.

The gentlemanlike and loyal-hearted solicitor did not, however, entirely approve of his wife. He had the instinct that she was at times insincere; and he had a very bad opinion of her niece Milly Nesdale. But he took life as he found it: his life was a busy one, and though his profession did not lead him to indulgence in human character, he was disposed to give his beautiful wife the

"benefit of the doubt," and to suppose, as history says of Peter the Czar, that "her merits were her own, and her faults those of her education and country."

As to the relations between the two ladies,—Myra Grey was at once very subservient to Lady Nesdale, and very jealous of her position in life; and as to the Treherne family, Myra's great object was to humour and please Montagu; for she had not lost the Indian habit of intriguing for promotion,—and she thought to herself, "Here is the future Earl of Caërlaverock; the present Earl is eighty-six; and there is no reason why Mr. Grey, after being so long the legal adviser of the family, should not get some excellent lucrative legal appointment; and then I may hold my own even against Milly Nesdale."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE EARL OF CAËRLAVEROCK.

WHAT the favour was that Treherne had begged of Mrs. Grey, was communicated to Beatrice before the hour was out; the next whirl of the elegant cab being to Spring Gardens, Charing Cross.

Beatrice was alone; she was unoccupied; at least she was only putting fresh water to the fading white roses Helen Wollingham had sent her.

Treherne threw himself into a chair, though she was still standing, still attending to the roses after shaking hands with him.

"Beatrice," said he, eagerly, "I have come to speak with you. This life is intolerable—to both of us! My uncle's lawyer, Mr. Grey, is going to Venice to arrange with him about some mortgages on the Lincolnshire property, which seem, in

consequence of my grandfather's will, to be a most difficult and complicated affair. His wife goes with him; I have just called on her; I have arranged with her that, if your father consents, you shall make this little holiday tour on the Continent. It will do you good; you are sickening and pining like a caged bird. I shall go too; I shall go and see my uncle at Venice. *You* shall see him. When he sees you; oh! when he *sees* you, Beatrice, he will understand that life is nothing without you! He will listen to me; and I will get his consent to our immediate marriage. If my aunt Eudocia could marry Mr. Wollingham, surely I may hope for consent to marry you; I have arranged it all with Mrs. Grey. She is coming to call upon you; to invite you; she will be most indulgent — most kind."

He stopped. Beatrice had dropped her white roses on the table, and set down the jug of water which was to be their lure still to a little freshness. She was seated opposite to him — listening to him — listening and looking at him; but oh! so deadly pale!

He rose, and poured some of the water into a glass. "I beg your pardon for my abruptness," he said;

"I ought perhaps to beg pardon for such certainty of consent" (and he smiled a feverish eager smile, answered by a shy smile of fondness from Beatrice), "but I am so anxious to put an end to this state of things, so anxious to see you look like yourself again. All I ask of you is not to breathe a syllable to any human being of my intentions with respect to seeing my uncle, or of our marriage. You might at once prevent the possibility of happiness; you would not be allowed to go, and I—"

"How *can* I go?" said Beatrice, at last; "how can you think I would go, and leave Mariana and my father?"

"Beatrice," said Treherne, with increased eagerness, "I am certain your father would be thankful to know you away on an excursion with these people. You are, at this moment, more of a burden and anxiety to him than you can yourself imagine. He knows Grey, and all who know him trust and respect him. There is no fear of your father's consent, and in a few months matters will be settled so that he can again rejoin his family."

"But it is not the refusal of his consent that I fear—it is that I cannot bear—oh! I cannot

bear to leave him—to leave him in prison and sorrowful—and to go away to enjoy myself. Oh! no, you must go alone; you must, indeed. And when you have seen your uncle —"

"Beatrice, it is *you* that must see my uncle, or that he must see. I have flurried you; I will leave you; I will come again to-morrow afternoon, very late, after Mrs. Myra Grey shall have called, and you will find it all settled."

It *was* all settled! So far from Captain Brooke objecting, he sent his "thankful compliments" to Mr. and Mrs. Grey, for taking his poor Beatrice this pleasant continental trip, out of hot anxious London: out of the strange, difficult position of living in lodgings at Charing Cross, with her father in the Queen's Bench, and her sister so much away. And so far from the gentlemanlike solicitor objecting, he received one of those indirect impressions from his wife which he never could exactly account for, that he was not only doing a kindness to a man who, his professional acumen told him, had been cruelly cheated, instead of cheating, in the speculation he had engaged in—but also a very pleasing civility to Lady Eudocia Wollingham; the Brookes being related to her on

the husband's side, and, of course, the temporary cloud under which they were suffering, an annoyance to her!

Mrs. Myra Grey called, just at the time Maurice Lewellyn was calling, to whom she was introduced, and on whom her dark eyes rested with infinite expression as she said slowly that he was "so like his father, *whom she had seen when a child*, that she would have known him anywhere."

And after she was gone, Maurice Lewellyn said that he was glad Beatrice was to have this holiday, but he wished it could have been with other company; for though Grey was a thorough gentleman, he did not think, by what he had heard his father say, that his wife was an estimable person, though he had never heard any distinct circumstances about her.

And then Treherne arrived; and his glad sparkling eyes made sunshine in the small drawing-room. And after a few days' of preparation, and a tearful parting with her father and dear good Mariana, Beatrice Brooke and her portmanteau, furnished with the neatest of travelling dresses, and an assortment of pencils and sketch-books to immortalise the scenes she was to visit, were

carried off by Mrs. Myra Grey and her husband to the South-Eastern railway, out of hot fevered London, away to pleasant unknown romantic lands, — away to Italy, her mother's native country,— away to realise the blessed dream of obtaining the good old uncle's consent to make two young hearts happy!

Treherne did not go with them. That would have been foolish—impossible; he did not even go by the same route. But he somehow contrived to time his journey so well, that he was standing on the steps of the Albergo Reale, on the Grand Canal, only the second day after his arrival, as if he had been waiting there ever since their departure to hand out of the gondola Mrs. Myra Grey,—and Beatrice, looking most joyous, most beautiful, and a little sunburnt.

"I am so glad you are come," said he, with agitated eagerness. "I will go and tell my uncle you are arrived. He desired I would let him know, that you might all dine with him the day you came; he has superb apartments in the Palazzo close by. I told him I had seen Mr. Grey before I left England, and that I thought it would be the end of this week before he could be

here. He is a valetudinarian, as you know, Mr. Grey, but a very pleasant one; very chatty and amusing. I told him Miss Brooke was travelling with you,—and was a connection of the Wollinghams,—and he trusts to see her with you; he begged his very kindest remembrances to Mrs. Myra Grey, and hoped she had not forgotten him."

Mrs. Myra glanced towards her husband, and murmured, "How *could* she forget him? How kind he had been to her in those disastrous days, when she was 'little more than a child,' and with her old husband, and her still older friend, felt 'almost as if she had two fathers.' How much also he had done for her! She would be a very ungrateful creature to forget him!" and Myra sighed. And then, with quite a different sigh (for she was an adept in every variety of sighing), she lifted her languid eyes to Treherne, and said that nevertheless it would be very trying to her to see her old friend again. "After such changes — *such* changes! And after such a time — almost a lifetime—almost thirty years!"

Well, they were to dine there nevertheless, and as in Venice people do not dine at a supper hour

as they do in London, Treherne had arranged that after dinner they would go to the opera, and row in the moonlight on the canals.

And as all was planned, so all was done. When first Myra entered the stately room in the Palazzo, where the ex-Governor resided, she was half inclined to have made a little sentimental scene, but the possibility was denied her. Time's "effacing finger" had almost rubbed her out, on the polished surface of that old man's heart; and she herself was so amazed at the alteration in his appearance—so thunderstruck at the bald, slim, senile elegance of the black thin-legged THING in an evening dress that advanced to meet her—instead of the fine, erect, martial-looking man in a uniform covered with orders, whom she remembered—that she was perforce natural.

She was angry with him too, before the first few seconds were passed, after her entrance and presentation. The quick instinct of woman told her, even while she curtsied to that astute "principessa," Madame Gouglokoff Oltakoff, that her story was known; and that she was looked at with inspecting and half-contemptuous eyes by that smiling Russian, who, as she retreated from the

general presentation, murmured behind her fan to her husband, "Oui; elle a dû être fort belle."

Women do that sort of thing very well—even their praise becomes contemptuous on such occasions. "Yes, she must have been very pretty—that creature I had a curiosity to see, because she was once the toy of your fancy."

Myra tried to comfort herself by the evidence that at least she was the junior by some years of the fair powdered grande dame, with light hair crépéd in unimaginably thin curls, who stood in the position she had once aspired to as Sir Pierrepoint's wife—but to what purpose was such comfort? or what did the elegant dinner-giver care? The man of fifty-five had been most assishly in love with the slender Hindoo, the wife of the collector of Burrumpootra; but the man of eighty-six loved his Gouglokoff,—who was so witty and gossiping, who knew so well how to "tenir salon," who was familiar with the stories of Potemkin and Platoff, and all the historical intrigues not only of the court of St. Petersburg, but of every other court in Europe; and who sat there triumphantly doing the honours with grace and finesse; granting, to

each of the persons present, the exact degree of courtesy it was fit she should accord,—but making Myra somehow feel, by her cold familiarity, as if she were spoken to from the steps of a throne.

Not that at any time of her life the Gouglokoff had feared a rival—had such a thing as a rival ever presented itself, speedily would she have gone a-mousing after her, and caught her in her claws, and snapped her up in one mouthful; but she had a certain vague dislike to the Hindoo adventuress,—and somehow Myra never felt so strongly that she was married to the family lawyer, as she did that evening in presence of Pierrepoint's Russian wife. The angry blood oozed hotly to her cheek, though it brought no colour there, at the scrutinising glances bestowed by the Russian lady on the necklace of uncut emeralds and pendent pearls which she wore that night (having, like all Orientals, a passion for jewellery); and many a look and many a slight, which were none the less bitter for being unseen by others, did she receive in silence.

But this unequal battle between the faded ones was unnoticed by the elegant old Caërlaverock.

He was occupied entirely with Beatrice. Always a great admirer of beauty, he had seen the beautiful women of most of the countries of Europe; yet he asked himself now if he had ever seen anything so charming as this young girl — so gentle and yet so merry; so conversable, and yet so modest; so earnest, and yet so simple; so brimful of the spirit of playful retort, and yet with such perfect taste as to what should be said or left unsaid. He was enchanted with her. He stood on his weary thin legs for a whole hour after dinner, bending over her while she took her coffee; pointing out to her the pictures on the walls of the room; displaying curious old snuff-boxes and antique gems and seals, collected and presented to him by many a foreign potentate in his long career.

He took both her hands when she was going away, and appealed to his Gouglokoff whether she was not "charmante," and Gouglokoff bent her crépéd curls and kissed the straight fine forehead under its rich plait of burnished brown hair, and smiled and said, "Mais certainement oui, *charmante*!" with an emphasis that did duty for enthusiasm. And then, blushing, laughing, and looking back to

the last, to answer Lord Caërlaverock's final sentences of jest and praise, and hope to see her again in a day or two, Beatrice descended the wide magnificent stairs of the Palazzo leaning on Treherne's arm, followed by Myra and Mr. Grey. And at the bottom of the stairs, on the marble flagstones, they stood till the nimble gondoliers pushed the gondola close in under the archway of the court, and shot out into the splendid moonlight, down the magnificent canal to the opera house: coming from the silver silence of that watery road into the sudden gush of light and sound; into the dazzle of gay dresses, and throngs of people, and the sound of rich music, "married" to tender words in that language made for singing,—the wooing Italian tongue!

And out again when that scene of melody and acted passion was over, to the sweeter realities of life.

Again the silver shining of those moonlit waters, glassy with stillness; again the glorious "palaces going by like a dream;" again the murmured pleasant sentences from Montagu's voice in its lowest, fondest undertone—"Oh! was I not right, my Beatrice? You see how my

uncle welcomed you; you see what an impression you made." Again the glad, the rapturous good-night; again the confident hope in the "to-morrow;" again the quiet of the happy sleep and the glory of prophetic dreams.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE DREAM VANISHES.

It had been understood between Treherne and Beatrice that she was not to expect to see him till very late the next day, probably not till the evening, after his uncle's dinner was over, when all had been explained, and his consent pleaded for and obtained. The earlier morning was to be spent in discussing Lincolnshire mortgages and legal possibilities with Mr. Grey. A mass of papers had to be read through, and it would be a fatiguing day for old Lord Caërlaverock. So Beatrice, when she woke, and the sunshine that shimmered through the green blinds and fell with a trembling ripple on the marble floor, reflecting the rippling of the water beneath, felt that she had a day in Venice at her own disposal.

She had hoped that Mrs. Myra Grey would pro-

pose to see something of that strange City of the Sea in which they found themselves. But the solicitor's wife was dispirited and discontented, and in no mood for anything but the most Indian-looking lounge on the faded yellow sofa of the lofty room. She told Beatrice they had "better rest a day after all their journeying."

But Beatrice needed no rest, and thirsted to go out. She gazed on the canal and bridges till her eyes ached with the sunshine; and every gondola that glided past, carried with it her desire to be one of the occupants.

Luckily for the prolonged impatience in which her day seemed likely to be wasted, visitors were announced. An old Dr. Bretton and his wife, and two Miss Brettons, who were staying in the same hotel, and had seen the names of the new arrivals in the "Livre des Voyageurs." Good honest Tenbyites; whom Beatrice had known long since, when Dr. Bretton preached there, and took in three pupils of whom Maurice Lewellyn had been one. They were received very joyously, and almost immediately began inquiring what Beatrice had seen or had not seen. She had only arrived the day before.

They had been there a fortnight, but Dr. Bretton had had a good deal of flying gout, and they had not "done" much, in consequence. Would Beatrice like to go with them now and see St. Mark's, and the Library, and all the glad and glorious sights they could cram into one day? Beatrice clapped her hands for joy: and on reference to Mrs. Myra Grey, that lady professed the utmost willingness that Miss Brooke should "spend the day" with her Tenby acquaintances, dine and drink tea with them. And leaning back on the faded sofa with a sigh rather more real than usual, she composed herself for a day's rest.

Great was the surprise of Beatrice when, her long day's pleasure being over, and the hour come (at last) when she thought it likely Trehernê might call, she returned to the apartments in the Albergo Reale, and found neither Mr. Grey nor his wife. The candles were not lighted; moonlight only, came soft and bright into the sitting-room.

She knocked gently at Myra's bed-room door, but there was no answer, and she feared to disturb her by repeating it. She went back into the sitting-room, and rang for lights. It would be awkward if Treherne came, and Mr. Grey out,

and his wife retired to rest, but still it would be a happy accident, for they could talk more freely of what had passed between him and his uncle, than in whispered sentences on the balcony, or at the far end of the room.

The waiter who answered the bell apologised. He did not know the Signorina had remounted to her apartment. He had seen the Signorina enter from the gondola with the English Dottore and his party. He had not observed the Signorina since. He had a letter for the Signorina from the lady her companion of yesterday evening. The Signora was imperative with him to give it to the Signorina immediately on her return. Would the Signorina wish anything more — any lemonade, or ice? No.

The nimble waiter vanished; and lost in amazement, Beatrice read the following note from her travelling companion:—

"My dear Miss Brooke,

"Circumstances, impossible to detail in a note which I am obliged to leave at the hotel, but connected with the important law business which brought Mr. Grey here, compel him

instantly to start for Florence. And as he is quite uncertain how many days the business may occupy him, or which day he could return, we have accepted the very kind offer of the Princess Gouglokoff to consider you under her charge till we can look a little further into our plans. I am sorry the accident of your being out with the Brettons prevents my wishing you good-bye; but it is so far satisfactory to me, that you will only have to go to bed on coming home, and in the morning early the Princess will send for you. All is settled at the hotel. Mr. Grey begs his kindest compliments, and I am

"Always yours very sincerely,

"MYRA GREY."

What did it mean? What could it mean? It was perfectly inconceivable! Was it joy? was it sorrow? Could the Gouglokoff be taking charge of her as Treherne's betrothed and accepted wife?

Beatrice was still sitting, looking in a sort of stupor at the often-read note, when she heard the grating of a gondola against the steps of the hotel; and in a few minutes more the light rapid step, so well known, so welcome, the one step in

the world—*his* step—was heard, and Treherne made his appearance!

No, it was not joy; it could not be joy; something had gone wrong—very wrong. His countenance wore an expression of mingled anger and vexation, such as she had never seen before. He looked sharply and defiantly round the room. "Are those people gone to bed, or are they likely to interrupt us while I speak with you?" Beatrice silently put the letter into his hand. At first he seemed as perplexed as she herself had been: then he said, with an impatient exclamation and angry compression of his lips—"I see it all; I understand perfectly what they mean to do. Not so easily baffled as that, my friends! Beatrice, will you wait for me here for half an hour? never mind its being late, this is not a moment for ceremony. I will come back and explain everything to you. Do not be vexed. Fear nothing, and expect me back again as soon as I have made out what I wish to know."

He was gone again, and the bewildered girl stood at the open window, watching one gondola after another shoot over the canal, and the lights come out and die away, and people land on the

steps of the hotel, and the hotel begin to get extremely quiet, as though most of its inmates were gone to rest. The notion of this calm made her restless. Where could Treherne be? Surely it was much more than half an hour, more than an hour, since he was gone? Could anything have happened to him? Could he have quarrelled with anyone on her account? What sudden stroke of discomfort had overtaken them all? Just as her heart was beginning to beat hard and quick, fearing she scarcely knew what, Treherne reappeared. He was extremely pale; he came rapidly across the room as she turned from the window, and took her hand.

"Beatrice," he said, "will you trust me? will you rely upon me, instead of upon strangers? If you cannot act with decision at this moment, between this and to-morrow morning we shall be utterly parted. I want you to come down to the gondola, now, without waiting. You still have your bonnet and scarf on, get your cloak; it is rather chill. I cannot talk to you here; come with me on the canal. Where is your cloak? can I get it? Which is your room?"

Beatrice trembled—she wondered—but she did

not like to refuse that agitated prayer. She did not know what to do, or what to think. Certainly his uncle had not consented to their marriage; that was her only distinct idea.

"I will get my cloak in a moment," she said; "my room is the one within this."

Treherne took up the light, and looked at the number of the room. He opened the door on the stairs, where one of his gondoliers was waiting.

"Antonio," he said, "you will see everything that remains in these two rooms — 18 and 19 in the hotel—brought down to the boat: the signora will not have time to overlook their removal; you will cord any box, and make packages of any articles not packed; you will receive two louis d'ors from me, when you have brought them, and you will give that ten francs to the waiter. You understand?"

"Excellency, yes!"

"Beatrice! Are you ready?"

"I was locking my box and my desk. I have no maid: Mrs. Grey's maid gave me what little assistance I required, and I thought I had better not leave the things so scattered about, if there is

no one in the apartment. To-morrow morning, she says, the Princess is to send for me. What can it all mean?"

"Come down; come, dear. We will talk in the gondola, Beatrice!"

But they did not talk; he sat by her for a few minutes, shut in, in that strange coffin-like boat, in utter silence. Then he sighed, and passed his hand over his forehead; and then buried his face in both hands, and muttered, "Oh! such a day of storm, and quarrel, and disappointment, Beatrice." Then he rose and opened the door of the gondola, and stepped out into the boat, and spoke impatiently to the gondoliers — apparently to hurry them, for they increased the already swift speed at which they were going. Then he returned,—leaving the doors open,—and resumed his seat; and Beatrice said, gently: "Now let me know what has happened; do not fear to vex me; after all, your uncle's refusal can only delay our marriage. I guess he has refused. Yet it is surely kind of Princess Gouglokoff to charge herself with me: what I cannot understand is, why the Greys could not wait for me."

"I understand it all perfectly, Beatrice. I

must begin at the beginning, for it is a long story. But first—"

Again he stepped out of the covered part of the gondola, and she saw his graceful figure between her and the moonlight; watching, as it seemed, for some other gondola to overtake them. The wind blew fresher, and fewer gondolas were visible; that glassy stillness was no longer on the water, which now ruffled brightly beneath them in ripples that as they still sped on grew almost to waves. She heard Treherne call eagerly to some one, "Antonio, is it you?"

"Excellency, yes."

"Have you got the things?"

"Excellency, all are here; there was no difficulty."

"Good. Be quick then; we shall be late; follow close!"

Once again, and the wind seemed to blow fresher and fresher, and the water was like the open sea on a fine night. In a few minutes more, the gondola glided alongside of a dark floating mass, which a hissing sound told Beatrice could only be a steamer. Treherne came back to her in

the covered part of the boat; he clasped her hands in his. He said, "Trust me, Beatrice; only trust me." The poor girl trembled.

"Oh!" she said, "let us do nothing wrong and rash and passionate; nor brave your guardians and relations. Let us be patient. My father would never excuse or countenance—"

Loud calls and confusion of cries on board the steamer; threats of instant departure from some one who stooped over the side and shouted to Treherne. He lifted her from her seat; he kissed her on the forehead; he said, "It is but six hours; we are only going to cross to Trieste; we will be married there; and when it is all irrevocable, we shall find it perfectly easy to calm matters down. As soon as it is impossible I should marry the person they intend for me, there will be no motive for them to stand out. Antonio has brought all your baggage from the Albergo. Come!"

Again the shouts from the steamer. Beatrice was dizzy and faint:

"*The person they intend for me*,"—He,—her Treherne,—married to some other bride! The words rung in her ears; she was conscious of no

other idea; who did they want to marry him to? Who?

She was lifted from the boat to the deck of the steamer, with her eyes still fixed in wild questioning on his face. "Who could they want to marry him to?" There was despair in the very thought.

The two gondolas shot silently from the side of the steamer, and in a moment were but as two black lines drawn on the water; the paddles of the vessel they were in, beat with a slow hesitating and then rapid movement; the die was cast—they were off!

"Now, my child, sit down here in the moonlight, and I will make everything as clear to you as that cloudless sky. You shall never repent this step; never, Beatrice, never!"

She had, then, eloped!

She looked around with a wild frightened gaze at the sea and sky, and burst into tears.

"Oh! Beatrice," murmured the young man passionately, "my life shall be made up of thanks to you."

CHAPTER XV.

CUPID AND HYMEN.

THE day had indeed been, as Treherne said, "one of storm and quarrel." After the fatiguing business of the Lincolnshire mortgages had been got through, Treherne half meditated a delay in his announcement to the elegant old guardian who stood in the enviable position of "Head of the Family." But he dreaded lest some accident,—a letter from Lady Eudocia commenting on the continental trip undertaken by Miss Brooke, simultaneously with his own visit to Venice; or a meeting with The Marchioness, who was also abroad on some wandering tour or other,—should forestal and neutralise the effect of his intended confession.

He therefore *brusqué*'d his avowal with the most eager rapidity, during a brief pause in

the running commentary of praise bestowed by the Earl of Caërlaverock on "that charming Beatrice;" who was, he said, more beautiful than a Narischkin he had once known,—more agreeable than his little favourite, Princess Soltikoff,—more playful than his former "grande passion," the daughter of the governor of Tchernaya,—and as spirituelle,—no—*almost* as spirituelle, as his own Gouglokoff! and he laid his diaphanous and slender hand on the ring-circled fingers of that fair and faded Russian as he spoke.

The acquiescing and somewhat artificial smile on the lips of the Gouglokoff altered to a little round 'o' of the frankest astonishment, changing to a hearty laugh and "*je m'en doutais,*"—as Treherne without farther preface exclaimed,—"I am so glad you like Miss Brooke, my dear uncle,—for I intend to make her my wife!"

Lord Caërlaverock contemplated his nephew with silent amazement for some moments, and then replied: "It is very well that you thought of mentioning so foolish an idea, mon garçon, in good time to understand from me, that such a marriage is *de toute impossibilité.*"

"It is a marriage I have determined on, nevertheless."

"It is a marriage which we will not permit."

"If by 'we,' you mean yourself and my other guardians, the attempt to prevent it will prove fruitless; you may *delay* it till I am legally of age (and so produce eternal alienation between me and those who oppose it); but no human power shall prevent my marrying whom I please."

"And it is your royal will and pleasure to espouse your *bergère* at all hazards? Then, my young prince, we must read to you some more documents (though we have had a good dose of law papers this morning) in order to change that opinion;" and the old man rung with a trembling hand the bell on his writing table.

"Luigi, desire Mr. Grey to come here from the apartment where he is writing, and to bring with him the papers he brought from England."

"Now, young prince," added he, in the tone of irony he had already adopted towards the excited young man, "you shall hear read a synopsis of the will of my excellent brother; and I advise you to extend your tour afterwards to so many pleasant places that you shall quite forget this

inamorata; for it is a love-dream that never can be realised."

"Reading fifty wills will not alter my determination."

"Ta, ta, ta; that we shall see; here is Mr. Grey."

The will was read, or rather the extracts from it, by which the Earl already gathered to his ancestors, endeavoured to coerce the conduct and apportion the fortunes of those who were to succeed him. Treherne was gradually enlightened by the information that his choice in wedlock was bounded to the five daughters of Lady Eudocia Wollingham, if he ever desired to inherit the large estates which did not necessarily go with the title. That if he remained unmarried—"then and in that case,"—or if he declined such choice—"then and in that case,"—or if he had no heir—"then and in that case,"—the property was to accumulate till another generation gave another chance of a marriage on the same assorted conditions; of cousin with cousin—male and female—and if it were still the obstinate determination of destiny to throw difficulties in the way of the deceased Earl's intentions as to the

property—"then and in that case,"—another accumulation for another possible marriage in another generation; only if Montagu died unmarried, without even a female child to succeed him and render a marriage with some male baby possible,—"then and in that case," Maurice Lewellyn, if making a marriage with one of Lady Eudocia's daughters, might inherit; and if there were no such marriage, his son on making a like marriage in the next generation, &c., &c.;" —with every entanglement of legal terms and legal suppositions, till at last the will sounded as if "then and in that case" no one would ever get anything at all.

Treherne heard it out, with a flushed cheek and an angry eye. When Mr. Grey paused, he said: "I never heard such a farrago of nonsense in all my life."

"Your grandfather's will, a farrago of nonsense?"

"Certainly. The will of a man in the last stage of dotage; and I will marry Beatrice, and have it set aside by Act of Parliament."

"You are an insolent young puppy, Monsieur mon neveu!" said the old peer, with a bitter smile.

Treherne rose. Mdme. Gouglokoff rose too,—and standing behind the great red velvet chair in which her irate lord was leaning back, pitting his weak voice and strong will against the younger combatant,—she bent over him, and said:—"Do not let us scold and call names; we know what a tyrant Mr. Cupid is, and how foolish he makes people seem, for a minute, who are not really foolish at all;" and she smiled and nodded at Montagu. Unappeased by the smile or the compliment, Treherne took his hat to go. "I have told you my resolution," he said, "and I will stand to it."

"Not here, young gentleman;—not here, if I have any influence with the English authorities in Venice."

"Here, or elsewhere, it matters not; it concerns no one but myself."

"It *does* concern others, insolent boy!" said the old earl, trembling with wrath at this open braving; "it does concern others. You imagine, I presume, that I have inherited the interest of all this property?"

"No, I know you have not; not all of it;—I have heard my aunt say so."

"Do you know what I have inherited; and on what conditions?"

"No, I do not. I never considered it any business of mine, and never had any curiosity on the subject."

"Very well; then you shall know now, if you can govern your temper and your manners enough to be seated for a few minutes longer. Mr. Grey, I will thank you to read the clauses affecting guardianship."

Again Treherne listened to renewed sentences of perplexity: appointing the deceased Wollingham, the Honourable Pierrepoint Treherne, and John Claverhouse Grey, Esq., of Lincoln's Inn, guardians; and providing that in the event of Pierrepoint's succeeding to the title, he should inherit twelve thousand a year (as ample "for a man without family"), and John Claverhouse Grey six hundred a year; but if "from any indulgence of the wayward fancies of youth," any attempt should be made to pervert the intentions of the testator by consenting to any marriage, other than was indicated by the will; and if, by any carelessness,—by want of due precaution, exercise of authority, or means of prevention,—such

a marriage were accomplished without consent of guardians, "then and in that case" a sort of penal forfeiture was imposed: the Honourable Pierrepoint's earldom was left to support itself on five thousand a year, and the solicitor's handsome bequest of income was completely annulled!

Intolerable to Treherne was the angry trembling sneer with which old Lord Caërlaverock—pointing to the paper as Mr. Grey folded it up again—wound up the measure of his endurance, by saying, "There, young gentleman, that is my brother's will; and though you are pleased to speak of it as a farrago of nonsense,—yet as I do not believe any power in England could set it aside; and as, if it were possible to prove he had no power to dispose of the estates, they would then revert to the family of my mother, to whom they originally belonged; and as I do not wish to pay twelve thousand a year to see you married to Miss Brooke, *with* my consent, or seven thousand a year to know you married *without* my consent, for want of as much care to prevent it as I can take, I warn you that I shall resist to the very utmost, all such plans of marriage on your part."

"Mr. Grey,"—said Treherne.

The gentlemanlike solicitor started. "I hope, my dear sir, you do not think of appealing to me. I can only confirm your uncle's judgment in this matter; I cannot perceive a shadow of doubt as to the course we are bound to pursue; irrespective of any interests of our own—of any interests but yours. You are young to make a choice—and—"

"And," said the Gouglokoff, with her Russian smile, "you may some day wish to make another! Here is my lord, now; *he* did not die of grief because he did not marry a certain lady. And some time you shall, perhaps, meet that most *charmante* Miss Brooke (after many, many years, when she shall be a leetle faded—as we must all be some day—as a certain lady is, whom my lord till last night had not seen for I do not know how many years), and your heart shall be so quiet—so quiet—that you shall be obliged to ask it whether it remembers at all the evening at Venice, when we had that so pleasant dinner; and when you plotted with Cupid against this good poor uncle, whom you have made very tired and very cross. Now, let us all be friends; and promise him—"

"I can promise nothing! My impatience of manner to my uncle was the result of his manner

to me; and I persist that the will is one which ought not to stand--which *shall* not stand. If, however, I have seemed discourteously impatient in the presence of a lady, I apologise for that, most readily."

And with a haughty bow which, beginning at Gouglokoff's eyes,—was somehow made to include the trio,—taking in, in its semi-circular sweep, the velvet chair with its angry occupant —the silent lawyer,—and the table on which lay the obnoxious will,—rebellious Montagu rapidly descended that marble stair where the evening before Beatrice's arm had rested in his; and throwing himself into the gondola, went straight to the Albergo Reale.

But Beatrice was out, as we have seen, "pleasuring" with the Brettons; and Mrs. Myra Grey, whom he desired in his perplexity to speak with, was, as her maid expressed it, "in a most heavenly slumber;" so Montagu went down again to his boat, and fevered himself more and more with impossible plans, until at last the time came when the Brettons had returned, and he knew he should find Beatrice in the Greys' apartment.

No sooner had he left Lord Caërlaverock than

that irate and experienced envoy turned angrily round upon Mr. Grey: "What is the meaning of this girl coming here with you, at the same time as Montagu, if this is the state of things between them?"

Grey's thoughts reverted to his wife and to the false impressions she had given him; and the irritation communicating itself to each of the perplexed party in succession, fixed itself in his case on Mrs. Myra, as the contriver of his present embarrassment.

It was agreed, on consultation between Lord Caërlaverock and his solicitor, that the Greys should immediately leave Venice; and transfer their charge of Captain Brooke's daughter to Princess Gouglokoff, who would "communicate with her friends." Mr. Grey then returned home. He had little respect for Myra's "heavenly slumber." He woke her hurriedly and angrily: he said, "What intrigue or folly made you persuade me to bring with me a young lady who it seems has planned to marry Treherne? You have seen these people; I have not; it was *he* who asked you to allow her to accompany us; you must have known how the case stood."

"Known,—known,"—said Mrs. Myra, sleepily and peevishly. "If I knew that Montagu Treherne admired the girl, I could not know he meant to be fool enough to *marry* her."

The solicitor's grave and sensible face wore so dark an expression of questioning at this speech, that his wife felt positively alarmed. "Dear me," she said, "whatever I have done to please and humour Mr. Treherne, has always been done in your interest—for your future! He will be earl. Suppose he did marry—then, in that future—"

"Let my future alone, woman; and let me forward my own fortunes as an honest man should, and as I hope I always have done. You will severely injure me, as it happens, and deprive your own children of the income left to me. I never spoke to you of the old lord's will—why should I? but by its provisions this future earl of yours will be a beggar, or very nearly so, and I shall lose six hundred a year through your folly. Now get up and dress—and pack—we leave this place in an hour."

A flash shot out of Myra's Hindoo eyes, but they relapsed into sullen languor. "I will be ready," was all she said. She felt instinctively

that it would not be prudent to say more. She had occasionally seen Mr. Grey in the imperative mood, and she had no desire to be a wave beating against a rock.

CHAPTER XVI.

FOREIGN TRAVEL.

"Do you not understand, my Beatrice," said Treherne, when he had narrated as much of the foregoing recital, as personally concerned him, "that if you had remained with the Greys, it would have been almost impossible to prevent our seeing each other. Grey would never have dared, Mrs. Myra would never have dared, to refuse me admittance: but the Princess Gouglokoff, in my grand-uncle's house, would certainly have kept you as a sort of state prisoner. She never would have permitted you to be absent from her; and, after what had passed, she would have forbidden my visits till you were gone. Till you were gone, my Beatrice! Oh! when I think that so great a misery was near, and that now we are together for ever. But you must be weary: I

will go and see if there is a good cabin, and you shall go below and lie down, till we come into port."

Treherne did not return for some minutes; and Beatrice, who had risen, and restlessly walked to and fro on the deck, looking with anxious sorrowful perplexed eyes at the cloudless heavens, the silvery waves, and the dark cordage and black chimney of the steamer—stopped in her walk, for she heard his voice in tones of unmistakeable and excessive anger; an altercation carried on in an Austrian *patois*, of which she could make out little or nothing.

He rejoined her, took a turn or two with her on deck, and then said abruptly—

"Beatrice, I solemnly swear to you — no, I will not mock you by swearing, for I am sure you will believe me."

"Of course I would believe you; what vexes you?"

"The strangest thing has occurred; the hurry, the agitation, the confusion which those confounded fellows, the gondoliers, make of names and places: in short, when I left you after reading Mrs. Grey's letter, I resolved on this: I

mean I resolved on trying to persuade you to leave Venice."

"You did not give me much choice,—Montagu," said Beatrice half tenderly, half reproachfully, with a wistful sort of smile.

"No: dear, there was not time for consideration. I went home and arranged for my own departure; and I sent Jacopo (would I had sent Antonio instead of that dolt!) to ascertain what steamers there were for Trieste to-night, and take a cabin for you,— but I find —"

"Is that all? that there is no cabin? oh! believe me, I want no rest; I am happier, less nervous, on deck talking to you."

"No, no: would to heaven that were all! It is not that,—but these fellows have made some desperate mistake. I really hardly know how to tell you, after promising you but six hours of sea; but they have not put us on board the steamer for Trieste."

"No! good heavens!"

"They have put us on board a merchant steamer going *from* Trieste to Alexandria, touching at Venice. I thought it seemed smaller and less well appointed than the Trieste boats,

and going below to see the cabin, I found the whole thing was a mistake."

Beatrice trembled from head to foot; she did not speak for some seconds. Then she clasped her hands, and murmured —

"My father; my dear father!"

"Dear, if you will take courage," urged Treherne, "I assure you I have thought of everything. We will be married at the English consulate at Alexandria, and take passage in the returning steamer. I will write to Mrs. Myra Grey to await us; she *dare* not return to England without you! Our marriage need not be declared till we get home. In short, dear, if you will but trust me, I will answer for your seeing your father before he hears or knows anything of what has occurred. These people had no right to leave you in the way they did. Keep a cheerful heart and trust me. We are not the first couple who have eloped to get married and been very happy afterwards; and we shall not be the last. Do not fear, my Beatrice."

Do not fear! How often in this world of terror and trouble has that phrase been spoken, how often will it yet be spoken — in vain.

Beatrice's fear and despondency gained the mastery for a time, even over Montagu's power of soothing her.

Yet there was nothing for it but patience; and the alarm and agitation with which she had first received the intelligence that they were not following in the track of her wily and selfish chaperon, but putting a still greater distance between her and her father, subsided at last under the influence of Treherne's words of love and comfort. Nothing was a real misfortune that left her with him! nothing could darken the radiant certainty that she was soon to be his wife.

Soon, too, the weather, which had been so lovely, changed to the wildest of those autumn storms that ruffle the Adriatic. Foreign sailors and foreign captains have somehow a more noisy and less orderly way of doing their work than the English. The shouting,—hurrying to and fro,—creaking,—trailing of cordage,—shifting of ballast,—and groaning of the labouring and heavily-laden little vessel; the asthmatic puffing of the steam-funnel, the slow beat of the overstrained wheels, the sudden crashing dash of some wave, giving a sort of trembling shake to the whole

framework of the steamer, or rising, with a wild leap, beyond the ship's side, and deluging the decks with water,—all struck terror and bewilderment into the poor girl's agitated heart.

She was no coward, she could have died bravely; without a shriek, with a hopeful prayer; it was not danger, it was not death, the thought of which perpetually made her clasp her hands in anguish. It was the thought of "the home news." The thought of her father and good pious Mariana receiving the wondrous intelligence that she and Montagu had perished together,—having eloped from all natural friends and ties,—and no voice there to justify them; no voice to comfort that gallant old officer already bowed in undeserved disgrace.

Remorse, for having in that bewildered last hour in Venice, failed in the strength to stand by her own sentence: "Let us do nothing wrong or passionate; nor brave your guardians and relations;" remorse, for having in that hour, thought more of the chance of his marrying another, than of all the steady words of denial she might still have spoken; remorse, for not having resolutely kept her seat in the gondola and insisted on

returning to the Albergo Reale; there to await the painful morning, the uncertain future, the alien care; all throbbed in hot miserable thoughts, coursing each other with wild monotony round and round her brain — till at last, repeated fainting-fits, and the torment of sea-sickness, made even thought itself impossible, and Beatrice remained too ill to care for surrounding things!

There were other women on board; ladies, though not quite of her own class; merchants' wives, the captain's sister, all kind helpful and compassionate as far as the illness of all mutually permitted, and all more experienced in voyages than Beatrice. She did not lack aid and soothing words, though they came from strangers.

And at last, the trying voyage came to an end. The joyful news that they were soon to leave that tossing prison for the firm land was communicated to her by the captain; and the gale which had blown during the voyage from Venice, subsided to a calm as they neared the port of Alexandria. The sun shone out there with a fierce and glowing heat, and the sea seemed a moving mass of diamonds, as the small steamer paddled slowly through the crowded bay. Merchant vessels of

every nation lay at anchor, flags of every hue of brilliancy fluttered in the breeze, and barges passed and repassed, manned by dark Egyptian crews naked to the waist, who pulled at their oars with a monotonous song.

Trembling and giddy—with that peculiar giddiness which results from a sea-voyage and sea-sickness—Beatrice leaned heavily on her lover's arm as she landed. A dreadful smell of dead fish, dirt, bruised eatables, hot beasts of burden, and filthy human beings, assailed her senses; and she saw,—rather as if it were in a dream than in the vivid reality,—the motley crowds wearing costumes such as she had only seen in books and pictures; piles of eastern merchandise, guarded by brown melancholy-looking men in white turbans, with bright dark eyes like burning coals; long strings of patient camels, irresistibly reminding her of Bible-lessons and childish days; and the strange haven donkeys with carpet saddles, tended by wild ragged boys—the Ishmaels of the world-desert of poverty.

Treherne spoke to her from time to time; pointing out, as they landed, the various objects which excite a stranger's curiosity. But in spite of

the effort made by her dizzy mind to comprehend, —in spite of the faint smile of attention with which she welcomed the sentences from that dear voice,—she felt as if she only half existed. Little she cared for the palace of Cleopatra, or the palace of Cæsar, or anything but the necessity of getting somewhere to rest with a real silent rest, if possible,—after the tossing of the sea, and the creaking, shouting, and bustling which had so exhausted her. Her soft eyes looked sleepily out on the eager little vagabond who obeyed Montagu's sign for the hire of his donkey,—and, lifted on that oddly-accoutred *monture*, a dream seemed to lead her on through the narrow and filthy lanes where the Arab poor congregate in wretched hovels,—past mounds of indescribable rubbish,—on into the heart of that city which is half glory and half gloom,—half mud-coloured walls, and half mosques and minarets and terraced roofs,—into the Grand Square of the Frank quarter.

There the houses were English-looking and handsome. All the consuls lived there; their dwellings distinguished by the floating over each of its national flag; joining many a fleeting gleam

of diversified colour to the glittering kaleidoscope of tints below.

There Beatrice saw, sweltering in the sun, camels kneeling with jet black slaves in crimson caps arranging their burdens; women shrouded like ghosts in long white veils, moving heavily along; Turks sitting smoking, grave and silent; grooms in petticoat trousers, leading horses with crimson velvet saddles richly embroidered; while,— moving to some wild alien music such as she had never heard before,—a detachment of odd-looking soldiers, dressed in white cotton uniforms, marched past her as she sat on the donkey led by her ragged little guide; anxiously watched by Treherne who saw that she was scarcely able to support herself.

He saw her safe at length to the hotel, where two of her fellow-passengers were also to take up their abode; and whispering, as he pressed her hand, "I must go to the English Consul's, and see about all arrangements,— sleep till I return, Beatrice!" he left her.

CHAPTER XVII.

RENEWED PERPLEXITY.

SLEEP till I return. That, Beatrice was unable to do. Wide and wakeful her eyes fixed themselves on the new objects around her, and a strained sense of listening which she would have given the world to overcome, beat in her wearied ears. But still it was *rest*—real rest at last—lying there so still and shaded on soft cushions, with a consciousness of safety after the wild sea-storm; of a fresher air after the insupportable mingling of evil odours on board the steamer; of quiet after the dash of the insulting spray, that had made even the change from the cabin to the deck comfortless; of satisfaction and peace in the thought that Montagu was gone to arrange for their marriage,—after the dreadful visionary anxiety that had haunted her; the image of her father and Mariana getting other dreary news!

In the midst of all the complicated sounds of movement in the busy hotel, she distinguished the youthfully rapid step of her companion ascending the staircase. "Well, dear Montagu?" she said with a smile, as he entered hurriedly and sat down by her.

"It is not well, it is not well, my own Beatrice: indeed it is all like a bad dream," exclaimed Treherne with a vexed laugh, biting his lips, and looking anxiously in her startled face. "The very first person I saw at the English Consul's was the courier Brascodemi, who accompanied my aunt, the Marchioness, abroad; she and Lord Updown are here! And though she cares about nothing but herself and her own interests in this teeming world, yet her lord may choose to interfere 'for the sake of the family,' and, at all events, make such a scandal and struggle of our attempt to get the ceremony performed, that I would rather, if possible, avoid him. The courier told me that they were going up the Nile, and after that they return to winter at Cairo. If you were not utterly fatigued, Beatrice, we might yet manage to elude them altogether! If we could get away from hence till they had started for their trip up the Nile, then

return here and sail for England by Marseilles, they being at Cairo,—we should never meet; there would be no row or difficulty. We must be married as privately as possible, and trust to all being hereafter made smooth. As to my grandfather's will, it is simply absurd; and as to his clauses of forfeiture, my guardians may comfort themselves by the prospect of easy evasion, for they have neither given consent, nor avoided taking every precaution in their power against our marriage—including the memorable plan of giving you over as a sort of state prisoner to the Princess Gouglokoff. I am sure I will give them a certificate of their strenuous opposition, and the torment they have inflicted on me."

Treherne spoke with a sort of feverish rapidity, and affectation of gaiety, but he watched Beatrice's face with an anxious glance. She turned very pale, and sighed, but she made no answer to his harangue.

"My Beatrice, there is no going back: take courage. The time that seems so long to you, because it has been crowded with unexpected events, what is it in reality? A week, a fortnight, three weeks, more or less. Why, you know that your

father expected you to remain away between two and three months; and even told you that he knew the difficulty of writing regularly, or long letters; and that if you kept a careful journal it would satisfy him quite as well when you returned to read it to him."

The tears rose in Beatrice's eyes: the picture of the sort of journal her father expected; the little harmless pleasures; the account of new places, scenery, pictures; the careless joys; the safe return; the glad meeting; all that Mariana and he were counting upon for her,—"the Pet of the Home,"—contrasted with all the real heavy perplexity of the time, smote her to the heart. But there was, as Treherne said, "no going back;" and there was, under all perplexities or fatigues of body and mind, the one blissful certainty that they were together; that they were to be together, sunshine or shade, all their lives, "till death do us part," and that his eyes were shining down upon her at that very moment with unutterable love.

"I am tired, but not too tired to go on, if you think it necessary. Where? How far? How long should we be?"

"If you would, we might occupy the interval in going to Suez; you would see something of desert scenery; it would rest us; we would see Cairo as we returned."

"I feel as if we were pursued by the angel with the flaming sword, Montagu! There is something ominous and dreary in the very accidents against us." Beatrice spoke with mournful earnestness. With vehement passion Treherne answered her.

"No accident that earth or heaven can send, shall rob me of you, and for the rest I care not. We are entering Paradise; we are not driven from it. Beatrice, Beatrice! if you loved me but half as well as I love you, you would rest quiet in the one thought that now we *cannot* be parted!"

"You have no father, no sister, Montagu. But as to not loving you——!" And Beatrice's eyes—bright, weary, and tearful, all at once—spoke the answer to his reproach.

Treherne's heart beat quick and fast; his one absorbing thought was, as he had already expressed it, "No accident that earth or heaven can send, shall rob me of you!"

And with that wilful and blaspheming thought

of earthly passion for his heart's one guide, he set forth again with his companion. More tediously, by canal and steamer, than the traveller of the present day; but flying, as if indeed driven by a flaming sword, past that sight on which the traveller loves to linger,—the beauteous city of Haroun Alraschid springing from out its dark sea of olives and acacia trees. The marvels of the pyramids—the citadel of Saladin—the mosques and tombs,—all these they were to see "on their return."

Beatrice began to feel ill and weary again; but she did not like to complain; and she went through the first bewildering portion of sandy desert tract well enough. That strange journey, as it used to be made,—with clumsy carriages drawn by wild little Arab horses and steady mules, driven by swarthy Nubians dressed in blue blouses and white caps, shouting, yelling, cracking their whips, flying from the city to the arid solitudes beyond; the air sultry to suffocation; and the wild rapidity of the overdriven cattle,—was nevertheless very trying to the nerves of one already so exhausted.

Sometimes a band of wandering Bedouins

passed like a swift picture; sometimes the vehicles whirled past a long string of camels, laden and patiently labouring on. Sometimes the corpses only, of those meek burden-bearers — the "Ships of the Desert" as they are called,—met Beatrice's startled eyes. Dead camels; skeleton camels; camels in every stage of decomposition,— with the great glutted and gorged vultures sitting by and upon them, as if ruminating on their past feast. Her companions were mostly persons going to India—some sad—some hopeful; few absorbed in that strange scene, even by its strangeness—all anxious "to get on."

And Treherne also was anxious to get on; but when they reached the chief station in their flying journey, the central station in the desert, Beatrice could no longer resist confessing to him that she felt too ill to proceed! A strange weariness and sense of confusion—a weight in the head and oppression at the heart—an indescribable sense of panic and distress—took possession of her. In spite of the sultry heat, she was seized with cold shiverings, and a giddiness, more painful than all she had endured on board the steamer, disturbed her aching brain.

At the station were beds, and couches, and

refreshment rooms — square whitewashed stone-floored rooms, but not without comfort. Treherne laid her on a divan in one of these, and determined to remain the night; he had hurried her too much; he reproached himself for want of care. He ordered a bed to be prepared in as quiet a room as they could obtain in that ungainly mass of building; he asked for a female attendant, and a gentle Nubian girl who spoke a few words of broken English, undertook to wait on the lady. He saw Beatrice safely to the room provided for her, and returned an hour or two afterwards, when the bustle of departure of those who had continued their journey was over, and the yelling cries of the drivers of horses and mules, and the shrill scoldings of those who were lading the camels, and all the calling, ordering, explaining, and paying of the cavalcade, had at length subsided into silence.

He hoped to find Beatrice better, but she seemed to suffer much; great restlessness tormented her; great pain at the heart; and her eyes — her beautiful eyes had the strangest expression in the world! a mixture of muddiness and lustre, such as may be seen in forest pools full of dead brown leaves, when the autumn sun

shines down on them through the thin branches of fading trees. The young Nubian watched her, silent and motionless as a bronze statue, except from time to time when some cooling drink was offered to the parched and fevered lips of the suffering girl.

It was an anxious night.

In the morning when Treherne again visited her, she seemed better; but as the day advanced, her feverishness evidently increased, and towards evening she was much worse, wandering and inclined to stupor. Certainly she could not proceed on her journey the next day.

No, nor the next—though she seemed for an hour or two to be almost herself again, and spoke of her departure, and of her vexation at the delay, and thanked Treherne for all his care. Late in the day, a change to greater fever than she had yet suffered from, alarmed him by its symptoms; later still, Beatrice was evidently delirious!

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE FEVER.

TREHERNE was startled and confounded, almost as much as he was grieved. Not only had he eloped with Captain Brooke's daughter, but here she lay sick, perhaps dying, without familiar female attendance, without the possibility of usual care. The people at the station did what they could, but what could they do? There was no medical man; no experienced matron; and a very general fear that the young English lady thus struck down by illness in the midst of her journey, had the plague-fever, kept all at an awe-struck distance from her room.

What was Treherne to do? He that had vowed no accident that earth or heaven could send, should rob him of Beatrice? What if that great sunderer of human hearts, DEATH, were

suddenly to part them? The thought sent a cold thrill into his veins as he looked at her; he leaned, staggering and sick with the new fear, against the wall of the room.

Did the fear smite his heart to repentance for all the rashness that had brought them there? No. He still thought more of his own pain, and his own loss, than any other. Not of her distant friends, but of his own immediate, unbearable, despairing loneliness. Tempted men do not translate their thoughts into clear language. He did not say to himself, "Better that Beatrice Brooke should run her chance of dying, nay, that she should die, and the news reach her father and sister with what confusion of circumstance it may, —after I have seen her buried here, apart from all friends, than that, — supposing she lives, — *I* should have to bear the pang of losing the object of the strongest passion I have ever experienced." He did not say this, even to his own perturbed soul, but he felt it.

From time to time too, hope rose, buoyant and light, to cheer him. When Beatrice seemed herself; when he contemplated that rich and vigorous beauty, the very ideal of some forest-

nymph of old, and nursed himself into the belief that it was scarcely possible death *could* so freeze with a touch, all that warmth and colour and brightness, and alert energy of movement, he was comforted. But as another day wore on into the delirious night, and yet a new day only saw intervals of stupefaction relieve intervals of delirium, Treherne's perplexity and anxiety increased to a degree he could no longer control. He sent one summons after another to Cairo for medical aid. Beatrice had almost ceased to recognise him; that of itself was dreadful. It is always dreadful, even to accustomed watchers of the sick, when "*the mind wanders*," when the soul goes on some wild journey of its own, away from direct human associations: fighting with imaginary dangers, yearning for impossible delights, living among flickering shadows, distorted and amazing pictures that have their origin in some faint magic-lantern reflection of past or present life. The eyes that look at you, and do not know you; is there any human sensation of fear that equals the heart-throb that beats under those glances?

Treherne had never watched by any sick-bed

before, except once. Except once! he remembered that occasion; a college companion, a young profligate lad who used to dawdle his time away in the Viennese Chancellerie, when Treherne was abroad; smoking and laughing and recounting his conquests. He remembered that lad's death; his raving—insane, indecent, pitiful to hear. Snatches of wild drinking songs, jests belonging to hours of mad debauchery; and in the midst of all, his mother's name plaintively moaned out, and his sister's. Treherne remembered the great ecstatic terror of death that young sinner showed, when he became temporarily conscious, and aware of his danger; the nervous despairing appeals to Treherne not to leave him to die amongst strangers, not to forsake him; and the wild delirious singing and shouting that crossed and mingled with this despair. He remembered the dreadful death, the convulsive battle of youth and strength with the final hour of doom; the mother and sister coming—*too late*; and his thinking, even while the gush of their weeping was in his ears, that it was lucky they *had* come too late to hear what *he* had heard; and only saw the silent face, marble and cold and peaceful.

He remembered the look of the streaming eyes and the faded face, when the widow thanked him "for all his Christian care and goodness" to that wayward and beloved Absalom of a lonely home; and how suddenly and vividly those past scenes of distress had been recalled to him years afterwards by some fool's jest, telling him that the girl whose brother had thus died, preserved Treherne's visiting card in a little silk case in her desk, with a lock of her brother's hair, as something precious and infinitely sacred.

And now he was once more to watch and to listen by a fever-bed. To wonder and to wait, doubting if youth or death would be strongest. Beyond the horror of such doubting, there was no horror here: poor Beatrice's wandering was the wandering of an innocent soul, but of an innocent soul in its first remorse. The one predominant impression among her wrecked ideas was that she was dying disgraced, dying without being married, and without being able to explain to her father how death had come so swiftly that he had overtaken love.

Her flushed and startled face turned to Treherne without a gleam of recognition,

but full of agonised appeal. "Father, dear father, forgive me!" was her piteous cry. Fervent were her assurances of all Treherne's goodness; but the thrill of pain was in all she said. Sometimes she fancied herself again on the tossing sea; sometimes wandering in the cracks and crannies of a burning cave; sometimes travelling over miles of arid, monotonous desert; never finding that dear guide, Treherne; dying alone on the sands, wasted and worn and feeble; vultures and hungry birds of prey wheeling around her, waiting for her death. With horror she waved her arms above her head to scare away those visionary torturers!

Then memory brought some shattered picture of other and calmer days. She thought of Tenby. "Oh! if I could lean my cheek against the cool white roses in the garden at 'The Home,' I should get well. I should get well. Send for Mariana! In that garden there are only English birds; sweet birds, glad birds, small singing birds. Carry me away and lay me there, among the cool wet roses, the white moss roses, the roses in the morning dew that we gathered for my father before he was dressed! Father, dear father, I was

married before I died; and they left me,—the people who took me abroad; they left me; I did not leave them. I went away with Montagu, it is true, but they left me first. I was to have been married, but I strayed away from Montagu in the desert,—the dreadful Eastern desert,—nothing but thorny plants with no sap in their leaves, nothing but sand, the hot red sky, the burning sky and the vultures, oh! the vultures." Then, yet more wildly, she exclaimed, "I see the skeletons of the horses, and the men, and the camels, all white and dry; there is nothing with any flesh left on it, but me, in all this sandy plain, and the vultures are coming to pick out my eyes."

As in a dream, the real pain mingles with the fancied suffering, her arms once more wildly tossing, caught her long dishevelled hair on Treherne's sleeve-buttons and tangled it there as he bent over her. With a piercing shriek she pushed him from her. "You are a vulture," she said; "you are a man-vulture, and you want to eat my heart and my eyes." Then, as even in the fever-madness some faint memory of love and peace crossed her brain, she muttered with a wild painful smile; "No; you are a friend. Tell my

father I was to be married to-day, this very day, but I died too soon." She sank back exhausted; and when she looked again at Treherne, it seemed to him that death really was in her face. Suddenly she spoke more rationally though with great excitement.

"Montagu," she said, "dear Montagu, if we could be married, it would spare my father half his sorrow for me. Get a clergyman. Send back to Cairo. Let him read the marriage service first, and the burial service afterwards. Listen," added she, with a strange smile, as she half rose and clung with both hands to his arm; "don't let the clergyman stop, even if I seem to die. You know I may *seem* to die, I am so very weak; but don't let him stop for that: let me die married. Oh! Montagu, won't you send for a clergyman? Go—go! I do not fear being left; I do not fear anything but my father getting the news that I died—with you—and not married! Will you not go, my dearest?"

The tone of anguished supplication went through him like a knife. Her eyes seemed lit by strange unearthly lamps; the scarlet in her cheeks deepened as though the blood would

burst through the transparent skin. Montagu rose, and went to ask if any medical man had arrived from Cairo, in answer to his summons.

No; no one had yet come; but an English family had just arrived,—a great noble family, who had a doctor of their own travelling with them. That was a mercy! Were there ladies in the travelling group? Yes, there were ladies, three; at least, two ladies and a lady's-maid—a lady, her companion, and her lady's-maid.

Treherne went to the lady. He entered hurriedly, with a brief apology, and beheld—The Marchioness! She was sitting, fat and languid, on cushions and shawls; her humble companion was fanning her; her maid was unpacking the thousand and one "little comforts," without which she could not travel. Her doctor, who greatly desired to bid farewell to a young brother on his way to join his regiment in India, had persuaded her that somehow it would be more for her health and convenience to extend her tour to the borders of the Red Sea at this especial juncture, than later in the season; leaving part of her suite with the courier to prepare the house in Cairo where they were to winter.

She looked apathetically up at Treherne. "Brascodemi told me he had seen you, at Alexandria; are you touring here?"

Treherne was too pre-occupied to notice the question. "I am come," he said abruptly, "to ask a very strange favour; can you spare one of your attendants for a lady who has been taken very ill here?"

"Ill? Spare one of my attendants? What do you mean? What a very strange request! If she is a lady, I suppose she has her own attendants; what does she want with mine? And pray what is the matter with the lady? Is it anything catching? I hope you have not had the abominable selfishness to come here to me—whom you know to be so careful and so afraid of infection,—if you have been with anyone who has anything catching? I really never could or would forgive it—it would be too bad—thinking so entirely of somebody else, and never considering *me* in the least! *Has* she anything catching, Montagu? and if she has, why upon earth have you gone near her? And why, above all, do you come near *me*? Do answer, boy; and don't stand looking at me and Miss Parkes as if we were beasts in the Zoological Gardens."

Treherne did indeed stand looking first towards one and then the other. Desperate thoughts flitted through his mind; thoughts of proposing to the humble companion to leave his aunt, then and there—with a promise of three times her present salary, and the *bonus* of kind and civil words all the year round; fierce anger against "that selfish Porpoise," as he inwardly called his irate aunt; sinking fears lest Beatrice, meanwhile, might be growing worse. And with all this, a certain desire to temporise and conciliate, for the sick girl's sake.

The Marchioness broke silence. "Will you answer, once for all, who is the lady; and *is* it catching, Montagu?"

This time Treherne answered to the point, with scarcely repressed impatience. "The lady's health is all that requires the interference of strangers. I don't know whether the fever she has is catching or not. I fear she may be dying—she seems so ill. I want a maid—one of your maids—only for this one night, till assistance comes; and want a doctor!"

The humble companion, who was chafing her lady's fat ankles during the colloquy, looked up

doubtfully. Sorrow and pain—neglect and lonely sickness—were part of her own life's experience. Pity was in her drawn features. "I 'm sure," said she, "if my lady pleases—." She got no further: the eyes of the Marchioness positively glared.

"Who gave *you* leave to speak? I 'm sure you are not so very quick and alert that you need look to disposing of your leisure time! Who, pray, is to wait on *me*, while you dance attendance on other people? You have my portable bath to get out, my tea to make, and the dog to attend to. And as to my maid, Montagu, you really are much mistaken if you think — "

"La! mi lady, *I* shouldn't go on no account to demean myself, waiting upon—*creatures*!" said the woman, with an angry flounce; and she looked with defiant sauciness at Treherne. He tried (a task most rare with him) to command himself. Beatrice was perhaps dying: assistance *must* be had. He was about to renew his petition at least for the doctor's attendance, when, with a burst of anger, the Marchioness stood up:

Erect the goddess rose!

like Diana in Horne's "Orion," only not with the same claims to chastity.

"Grant me patience: Montagu," said she, "do you persist in standing there, bringing, by your carelessness, infection and disease among us all? I really can't assist people I don't know; particularly people under such very—ahem—equivocal circumstances! Do go away! Go!"

"Miss Parkes, burn some aromatic gum where he stood! Really, if one's visit to the Holy Land is to be attended by such disagreeable circumstances, one had better have staid at home! Tell the Marquis I want him. Send a message to Doctor Foljambe; why isn't he here? Get some tea ready. Burn some gum, I tell you,—burn some gum! Mr. Treherne's conduct is perfectly preposterous! Just as you said, Benson; some creature travelling with him. Most improper! I only hope *I* shall not take anything! I declare it makes one feel quite nervous! Fancy being ill in this out-of-the-way place, and Foljambe perhaps not half as skilful as he was said to be by Lady Dorimer. One's acquaintances are so fond of recommending their servants, their doctors, their artists, and those sort of people, just to exert patronage. I don't think, as it is, Foljambe is half attentive. I wish we had not arranged to halt the night here!"

And with a running murmur of discontent, like a brawling brook over stones, the Marchioness resettled herself among her shawls and cushions; and dismissing from her mind the impertinent interruption of the dying girl's case of danger, ruminated entirely on her own chances of infection.

Meanwhile Dr. Foljambe was even less attentive than before; for Treherne, meeting that gentleman, and finding a more compassionate auditor in him than in the Marchioness, entered into an eager discussion of Beatrice Brooke's symptoms; and saw, with horror, while he detailed them, the increasing gravity of countenance of the young medical man. The *reality* of his own vague half expectation that DEATH might ensue, smote him as if the idea occurred for the first time.

"Good God! you seem to think she really *will* die," said he.

"I do not say she will; but these cases are so uncertain! Meanwhile let her be soothed and encouraged; there is so much morbid dejection in these attacks, re-acting on the patient's state."

Treherne hesitated; muttered something; hesi-

tated again; and then bluntly declared to the doctor,—without however giving her name,—the state of despair in which Beatrice was, and the circumstances attending their flight from Venice. "Save her," he said, "save her; her death would break my heart!"

CHAPTER XIX.

BEATRICE IS MARRIED.

"ARE you sleeping, Beatrice?" said Treherne, in a low voice, as he entered the room after the doctor's prescription had been given to her.

"No,—I am dying! I hear you, but the words seem all faded and distant. I see you, but everything is confused. I remember, as if all my life were so long ago—so long ago! Oh Montagu!" resumed she, with a burst of renewed passion, "what will become of me? My father! my father! If I could only say "husband" once, and you could tell him I died your wife. Montagu!" —and her look was one of such wild appeal, that Treherne first shrank, and then with a burst of passion, folded her in his arms;—"Would it be a great sin to call me by that dear name to him, even if you cannot get some one to join our

hands before I die? He has suffered so much—my poor father: He is so proud, so honourable. Oh! God, have pity on me! Thou, who knowest all hearts, THOU knowest I meant no wrong."

And this time, the appealing eyes looked, not to Treherne, but with a desolate wildness upwards. Upwards! beyond the blank ceiling that hid the sky — beyond the world that hid God from her thoughts. Then a faint stupor dulled all her being, and she lay with her eyes wide open, and that expression in them which thrilled Treherne's heart with such inexpressible terror; that muddy lustre, like the sunshine on pools full of dead autumn leaves.

When she was again conscious, Treherne spoke to her; he was standing by her bedside with another gentleman, with some one in a dark dress—with a clergyman. Beatrice gave a wild cry of joy.

"Here is the chaplain of one of our consulates, Beatrice, who has been good enough to consent to a little delay in his journey, to make you my wife; do you hear, darling?"

Beatrice's eyes moved quickly from side to side, but she answered nothing.

"Oh, love of my heart! Oh, Beatrice! here is help. Don't die!"

Something like a smile quivered over the hot dry lips of the poor girl. "No," she said, "no, Montagu. I won't die, if I can live!"

"Do you think you will understand what this gentleman—what the chaplain will read?"

"Yes. I am to be your wife; let him make me your wife. I will not die till then." She folded her hands with anxious earnestness, and immediately afterwards unlocked them; they fell by her side.

"God help us both, and make me a pleasant memory to Montagu, when I am gone!" she said: and then turning to the chaplain, she added faintly—"I think death must be very near, I feel so much less confused. Marry us quickly: and be sure that it is not such grief as it seems. I would rather be his wife, though only to die in his arms, than live for any destiny that could part us!"

The eyes of the English chaplain were bent on her with the deepest compassion. His voice trembled, the words faltered from his lips, as he read with earnest gravity the brief ceremony appointed by our Church, for that solemn union which death

only should have power to unlink! A deep sigh of relief from Beatrice at the conclusion, was echoed by both her companions.

Then she turned deadly faint; she caught nervously at Treherne's sleeve. "Oh! Montagu," she said, "is this death? Is this indeed *farewell?* Farewell, my darling! Farewell love, and farewell life! Don't forget me!"

"And so saying, a deadly swoon seized her, and she lay with her head on Treherne's arm, like a lovely statue of marble.

He never moved his arm. He scarcely stirred his bowed head from its bending as she sank to that swooning sleep. He wrung the chaplain's hand, as he noiselessly retreated from the apartment; and sat and watched his dying love for hours.

But when next Beatrice moved and woke, he knew, and she felt, that somehow the plague-fever was past; and that though she might die of weakness, she would not die of the disease which had smitten her down in the bloom of her youth so suddenly.

Her eyes turned on him—sane, quiet, with a sort of serene weakness in them. Her hand

pressed his feebly. She smiled, with a feeble but conscious smile: "Husband," at length she whispered, "call me once 'wife;'" and Treherne, as he pressed his lips on the little hand that lay within his own, said in a soft fond voice, "My wife, my wife, my poor Beatrice, my very wife!"

And the great stars came out in their intense southern lustre on the warm depths of that eastern sky,—shining over the land of Egypt! Over the desert tracks, and over the city walls; over Christian churches and Turkish mosques; over those scenes with all their blessed traditions where the holiest of footsteps passed among the olives of the garden, and climbed the hill of Crucifixion; over the groups of travellers scattered here and there, with weary camels and merchant burdens; and over the strange rest of that bridal night, where the shadow of death was fellow-watcher till morning, with that young enamoured man!

Also on the less romantic repose of The Marchioness; who allowed Dr. Foljambe not even the most faint and broken approach to slumber; her whole mind being pre-occupied with frenzied apprehensions that the presence of Treherne in her

apartment might have brought her some feverish infection. Every half-hour her weary humble companion, her maid, and the scattered servants, were roused into a group of half-sleepy half-provoked slaves, with her exclamations and assurances.

"I am sure I have the plague! I feel that I have got the plague! Go and fetch Dr. Foljambe. I am certain he either denies it out of folly, to re-assure me, or else he don't know the symptoms. Give me the proper remedies for the plague! I suppose even if I haven't it, they won't do me any harm. Let my nephew, Mr. Treherne, be told, if he attempts to come near me again, the Marquis shall resent it. Burn some aromatic gum! Fetch the doctor! Fan me,—I'm too hot! Now I'm too cold! That's one of the symptoms; I know shivering is a symptom. I have caught the fever, and I shall certainly die! If I find you are denying my symptoms, Dr. Foljambe, rely upon it, I will find a way to show my displeasure. Give me remedies for the plague."

And at last,—for human patience has its bounds,—even the patience of a young strong medical man, engaged at a good salary to attend

one fanciful patient, instead of walking the hospitals,—at last Dr. Foljambe administered a remedy for the plague the Marchioness herself was becoming to the hot, weary, overworked group of her various dependants,—by mixing and presenting with a courteous bow, a tolerably strong soporific draught.

And the stars, which were impartially lighting all the emptiness and all the fulness of earth, looked down on the building, in one of whose most cushioned corners the empty head, cold heart, and corpulent figure of that luxurious aristocrat lay,—and found her buried in a profound slumber.

CHAPTER XX.

A CALM AFTER THE STORM.

On the fifth day Beatrice was out of danger, though very weak; and the evasion of the only member of Treherne's family then on the same track, being rendered doubly easy by the Marchioness's fear of such an encounter, and her utter ignorance of who Treherne's companion might be,—their journey back to Alexandria in time for the very first steamer that afforded the opportunity of getting to Marseilles, was accomplished without hindrance or event of any kind.

Beatrice, naturally healthy, lifted almost instantly from the attack of fever that had prostrated her. Her gaiety and eagerness returned, with the joyful consciousness that Treherne and she were now united beyond the power of man to divide them; and she was able to laugh (for the

wild weed merriment grew strong in her heart) at his description of the Marchioness and her terrors, when abiding under the same roof with her, during that dreadful time.

As to the difficulties that surrounded their return, Treherne made very light of them. Before leaving Venice, and when he imagined his voyage with Beatrice would only extend to Trieste, he had written a letter to Mrs. Myra Grey, compounded of almost equal parts of entreaties, reproaches, and promises; protesting against her apparent renunciation of her charge, as calculated to do Miss Brooke serious injury,—by forcing disagreeable explanations with her father, as to what had occurred abroad. And resolutely declaring that feeling responsible for the arrangements he had made for her with Captain Brooke, he would utterly refuse and protest against her being delivered over to the Princess Gouglokoff; that he should, on the contrary, see her safely placed with the Brettons, who had gone to Trieste; feeling sure Dr. Bretton, from his connection with the Lewellyns, would not demur a moment to the arrangement. That he would afterwards expect Mr. and Mrs. Grey to follow

the original plan agreed upon, and escort Miss Brooke back to England.

That as to the idea of his marriage, they would "talk of it two years hence," when he became legally of age; but that certainly, after the scene which had taken place on the subject between him and his uncle, it could not be very pleasant for Miss Brooke to be detained as a sort of hostage for his conduct, in a house where her presence must be so unwelcome. That Miss Brooke herself would not consent to it.

That, after seeing her to Trieste, he would probably proceed to Vienna, to visit his old colleagues and friends; and, finally, that if the Greys declined to accede to his wishes, he would hold no further communication with them as long as he lived. They might address their answer to the poste restante at Trieste to be forwarded to Vienna up to a certain time, after which he should return by way of Trieste to Venice.

Fortune so far favoured Treherne in his rash elopement, that it remained unknown. The Greys wrote,—remonstrating, reasoning, appealing, and quoting his uncle as supreme authority for what had been done or proposed to be done; hoping that

when he "took time to consider," he would see the wisdom and decency of the arrangement; and assuring him that "real business connected with the sale of lands" took Mr. Grey meanwhile from Florence to Rome, where one of his principal clients had appointed to meet him, glad of the opportunity of consultation afforded by his visit to the continent.

Receiving no answer to these epistles (as how should they, when Treherne was gone to Alexandria), the Greys took for granted that the young man's wrath was too great to allow of his discussing the matter in any other light than as he chose it to be settled.

Many perplexed consultations then took place between them how best to keep a "calm sough" with all parties. The advantage which might have accrued from the tranquil shifting of Beatrice from one chaperon to another, was no longer possible. The threat of cutting the solicitor and his wife for ever, made by this wilful scion of a wilful stock, was a menace which he was quite capable of carrying into execution; and after all he was "the heir."

They might, by refusing his request to re-escort

Beatrice to her friends, merely precipitate the dreaded marriage which he expressed himself willing to "talk of two years hence." Much might happen in two years. Meanwhile a great deal of scandal and struggle would be avoided, if they could reconvey this young lady to her friends, and so wash their hands of her.

A copy of Treherne's valedictory epistle to Mrs. Myra Grey was forwarded to Lord Caërlaverock, who was relieved at finding the young rebel apparently so much more reasonable than he had feared when first that startling intelligence "la colombe s'est envolée" was communicated by the Gouglokoff. And at length, changing their tactics with the change of circumstances,—it was decided that the solicitor and his wife should agree to resume their charge of Miss Brooke for the return journey to England, Mr. Grey undertaking to meet her on her return to Venice,—at the landing of the steamer, on the one condition, that "after the scene of family anxiety of which Mr. Treherne's interest in this young lady had been the unhappy cause," he should by no means attempt to see her or even to write to her while under their care.

Treherne got all the letters at one and the

same time, on his arrival at Trieste; he glanced impatiently over the remonstrances and reasonings of an earlier date, read carefully through the "letter of capitulation," as he called the last, and tossed it down with a scornful and satisfied smile.

"My own beautiful Beatrice, I shall accept their one condition; you shall go back, as you came, without any attempt at escort on my part! I will be in London before you, waiting your arrival. You will send a note to me at the Travellers Club the moment you can do so without observation. We must be prudent, to avoid vexation and discovery. After Mrs. Myra Grey's cool throwing you over that evening at Venice, I do not suppose that you will be on very intimate and conversable terms. It is unnecessary to say, let nothing wring our secret from you—a secret on which so much depends."

"With these people—impossible, dear Montagu. But to my father, I trust the very day after we shall meet in London you will accompany me to him, and let him know what has occurred. It shall be a secret from all the world except from my father and Mariana."

Treherne sighed restlessly; looking, not at

Beatrice, but at the heap of opened letters on the table. He rose, and kissed her tenderly on the forehead. "My own, we must think well, and settle what to do when we meet. My future is so tangled by that will; your father is so unlikely to bear a marriage that is not to be owned; there is so much that is perplexing and unfortunate; oh! Beatrice, forgive me, and promise me to wait till we mutually decide how this shall be told; there is something I wish to confide to you, before any of these explanations can take place—something I dread, and yet long to say ——"

He paused; looked wistfully and absently again at the letters; sighed; took a turn or two up and down the room; sat down, and buried his face in his hands.

Beatrice moved gently towards him. She bent and pressed her lips fondly on the shining curls of that bowed head. "Do you think I mean to be a rebel wife so soon?" she said, with a smile. "Believe me, your will shall be my will; what you decide shall satisfy me. I love you; I trust you; I anchor every hope on earth in your heart and its affection for me. I swear to wait what you shall think our best time."

He looked up; he folded her in his arms. "My gentle fervent Beatrice" he said, "if ever man loved woman, I love you. If I thought the day could come when you would speak to me in coldness, or anger, or alienation, I would shoot myself this hour! But I am a fool to talk so. Here we are once more with the flaming sword of 'hurry' driving us,"—and he laughed with a forced vexed laugh,—"We are but just arrived, and for the sake of every chance of future comfort we must close with the offer of the Greys; get you back to them to-morrow, and look to our meeting in London."

"And no more partings then, Montagu! so you need not speak so sadly."

"'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.' Am I not parting with you now?"

"You will tell me I only *half* love you,—as you did once before,—if I say to you that I can part quite cheerfully—quite gladly—quite hopefully. Oh! Montagu, have we not our whole lives to spend together? the reverse of that pretty seal you have with the Aloe, and '*Un anno di gioia per un secolo di dolor*;' years, long years of peace and joy, for a few anxious days!"

The glory of her eyes! the triumph of her clear glad voice! the fondness of her smile, with all its southern warmth of expression; the gloss and brightness of her beauty, as she stood there cheering him with pleasant words!

Why did he still answer with a sigh? Why, when he had seen her safe on board the steamer that was to take her to Venice, with every little comfort for her brief voyage—the new book, the basket of fruit, the gay strip of carpet under her feet, the silken mantle drawn carefully round her, and the sunshine above promising the late autumn calm that should tinge with golden glory the lions of St. Mark,—did the look with which he answered her farewell gaze of fondness, fade to such an expression of pain perplexity and gloomy thought? Is love so small a thing in comparison of money, Montagu Treherne, that the "tangling of the future" of an old man's foolish will (a will that you professed yourself so sure to be able to set aside) could darken so fair a honeymoon with a cloud from beneath which there can be no lifting?

Some such cloud there certainly was on the young man's spirits; something beyond the dejection of parting temporarily with Beatrice—beau-

tiful and affectionate as she was, and enamoured of her beauty, and anxious for her love, as he professed himself to be. He saw her lovely eyes —"haunting eyes"—all night long, while travelling alone in the railway; between him and the dark clear sky as he restlessly lifted or lowered the heavy window of the carriage; between him and the pages of the new sprightly French novel on which he vainly endeavoured to fix his attention; between him and the burly Austrian general asleep in the opposite seat; between him and all other objects, even till the first streaks of daylight breaking in that foreign sky, brought him the relief at last of slumber!

And not once, in all the long night, did the pain and perplexity under which he was suffering leave his heart: but, steadily as the shadow marks the waning time on a sundial, they crept ever onwards through the bounded circle of his thoughts.

We know this feeling,—such of us as have even a brief experience of life and its troubles,— in the sense of some great anxiety, which fills us with a wish to halt and to decide,—a vain longing for some solemn pause which would help us with

a neutral hour; and the dark shadow will not wait, but passes round.

We know the feeling,— some of us,— in the sense of a great remorse; when the dial seems only to reckon the time that has past since we *might* have halted and did not; when we *might* have decided for the better, but rashly took the worse.

And while the black shadow steals round on our saddened hearts, the ominous words "Irrevocable, irreparable — irreparable, irrevocable!" seem to beat to and fro with a dull muffled sound from the pendulum of the great clock of Time.

CHAPTER XXI.

A SECRET MARRIAGE.

To "keep a secret" among strangers and indifferent persons, who have no claim on our confidence, or sympathy with our feelings, is the easiest thing in the world. But to keep a secret, however important to our own destiny or to the destiny of others, from those with whom we dwell in love, intimacy, and the bond of near and dear connection, is the most restless of human trials.

It is not the telling or withholding of a certain piece of intelligence; still less is it the asserting or denying that which remains unquestioned; a fact hidden in the recesses of our own hearts. It is the perpetual snapping of the thread of thought and speech; the trembling on a sort of precipice of memory, where there used to be

a pleasant easy sunny path from our mind to the minds of our loved ones.

Like the sudden land-slips that transform some smiling hill-side into a rugged mass of rocks, tearing asunder the calm homesteads, each with its garden-plot and meadow ground,—creating strange chasms of distance, where there had been dear neighbourhood,—a sense of danger, where there had been the careless safety of custom,—and an abiding silence where voice had so readily answered voice,—so does the "keeping of our secret" mournfully disunite and lay desolate the ground of fellowship on which we formerly met.

Even where there is agreement among the members of a united and loving family, "never to mention" some particular subject; some painful event; some error, perhaps, of one of its members, exiled by sin; some unutterable wrong which we would fain forgive; some wound whose healing depends on the thin cicatrice never being touched,—even so, how difficult it is to keep for ever clear of that tabooed and dreaded topic! How the minds of all seem to be continually veering to it, as the mimic swans of the child's

toy veer helplessly to the magnet; until by some uncomfortable spell we are driven or attracted towards saying precisely what we should not,—

Striking th' electric chain wherewith we are darkly bound,

and sending pain from our own hearts to the hearts nearest and dearest to us!

But if it is difficult to avoid certain topics, even where there is agreement to avoid them, how much more difficult must it be where there is, apparently, free exchange of thought for thought; where those who listen in smiling love, think they hear all; and those who speak, have for ever to "fence in" the consciousness of some past event or future plan,—some outlaw's den of wild projects,—some Rosamond's bower of disallowed delights,—or some grey ruin haunted by dead hopes!

To these hiding-places of the soul, our own words may at any moment yield up the infallible clue: to these we may lead the footsteps we most desire or are most bound to bar out. Let the heart watch,—sad sentinel, weary of its post! forbidden to speak save to those who have the answering watchword; forbidden to slumber lest its sleep should betray; forbidden henceforth the

joys of unchallenged companionship, or the freedom of a spirit at peace with itself and all the world.

Heavy is the weight of the armour worn in such a service! Heaviest to hearts like Beatrice Brooke's; to the frank, the impassioned, and the young.

Of course, there are those to whom reserve is natural and habitual; those who from their earliest youth "stand on their guard," as it were, with their most intimate and closest ties. And there are those who acquire that reserve in later years; whose souls have cased themselves in a sort of petrified covering from the chill droppings in the cave of that stern Egeria, Worldly wisdom; those whose veriest acmé of boast it is, that words cannot startle them, nor fondness bewray them into confiding that which they think it prudent not to communicate, but that under all circumstances of alarm, distress, or temptation, they can "keep their countenance," and "keep their secret."

The secret Beatrice had to keep, was one which was daily and hourly on the point of betrayal, after her return to England and to the companionship of her father and sister.

Vain was the satisfaction of Treherne in a number of small circumstances that favoured its concealment. That the Greys had not the remotest notion that Beatrice had been to Alexandria; imagining that time past at Trieste with the Brettons, who were strangers to them, and were still abroad. That the Marchioness was equally ignorant of that great fact; her fear for Self and Co. having prevented even the risk (which in his despairing fear of Beatrice's death he was willing to run) of her maid recognising the beautiful girl on the improbable chance of her having seen Miss Brooke on that single occasion of the "soirée dansante."

Vain was the comfort that Lord Caërlaverock was not only unconscious of the act of overt rebellion that had followed the "great scena," as the Gouglokoff termed it; but on the contrary, firmly believed that Treherne had "thought better of it," and hesitated to sacrifice his future to a wild fancy,—though he had insisted on the Greys standing to their engagement and escorting his "Bergére" home again: impressed with which belief, the old diplomat rather chuckled over his own temporising shrewdness, and wrote a

letter to Treherne, saying he accepted the challenge to "talk of his marriage two years hence, when he was legally of age," and he hoped the conversation would be more gay than their Venetian Council of Four.

Vain was the apparent certainty that unless, as children say, they "told of themselves," there was time for deliberation, and power to keep their marriage secret as long as they pleased; till he was of age; till he had ascertained what he could do with that absurd will of his grandfather's. Every sentence Beatrice spoke was a nervous trouble to her. Every look she gave to her father's kindly face seemed to invite a reproach.

Every now and then she was seized with unaccountable agitations. Her heart quailed, her voice trembled, her cheek crimsoned, or her eyes filled with sudden tears, from some cause which was utterly inexplicable to her home-friends. In talking eagerly to those who were eager to hear, she was continually on the eve of betraying herself by speaking of Alexandria, of the desert, of that dreadful storm in the Adriatic gulf; and describing things she was not known ever to have seen. In speaking

of Treherne, her very wish to avoid the impression of too great an intimacy, led her into the opposite extreme; and even simple Captain Brooke and calm Mariana would fix their eyes on her with a vexed and puzzled expression, which redoubled her agitation; wondering what had occurred between these two of doubt or quarrel,—though but a lover's quarrel,—since at Tenby, and up to the time when Beatrice left England, they were such a light-hearted merry pair of friends!

A dawn of anxiety rose in simple Captain Brooke's mind, lest the handsome young Welshman should be "trifling with his girl's affections;" and a sore struggling sensation choked at his heart, when he thought that perhaps "what had happened lately" to himself might stand in his child's way, by making Treherne's proud relations unkind about her. He redoubled his tenderness to Beatrice. Who could tell? Perhaps the poor child had her vexations, and would not reveal them for fear of fretting him. Something certainly was wrong; and she was not well, his darling, his bright love, his pet of The Home. He even ventured on a little gentle hint to Mariana, to ascertain whether Beatrice was

"sorry about anything," or had not been kindly treated by the Greys, whom she scarcely ever mentioned. He did not think her tour had done her good: on the contrary, she seemed less well than when she went.

But Mariana's gentle inquisition sped but ill. Her innocent cross-questionings were productive of startled looks, crimson blushes, and anxious sighs, but of no satisfactory information as to Beatrice's state of mind. Mariana came to nearly the same conclusion as her father—that Beatrice was in love with Treherne, and that either his pride or the pride of his family caused some hitch, some delay (for she could not think it more) in the avowal of his intentions.

Beatrice's position meanwhile with her husband was daily torture to her, though he seemed more and more enamoured every time they met. To have to meet him as if he were only an acquaintance; to walk with him now and then, as if she had no right to walk with him,—making arrangements and appointments for that purpose; to steal, at rare intervals, to his house, in guilty secresy; to receive him as a mere visitor at her own home; to know the major part

of his days and evenings spent with other people; to sit reflecting on all this, while he was keeping engagements as a bachelor in the society he was accustomed to, fevered and saddened her.

She was comforted when she saw him: the things that seemed so wild, aching, and dismal to bear in his absence, took a more tranquil and rose-coloured aspect in the sunshine of his presence; she could smile at his gathering of instances of historical secret marriages and romances, and his assurances, between kisses and smiles, that she was far better off than deserted Arabella Seymour, and only one degree worse off than Anne, Duchess of York, Lord Clarendon's daughter, whose marriage was suspected only by the increased respect with which her own mother served her at dinner.

She could smile — while he was there to evoke the smile; but when alone, she thought, "How shall I ever bear this for two years, which it seems so impossible to continue to bear even through a few weeks?"

Once she spent an unendurable evening at the opera, to which her father had pressed her to go with the same friend whose ball she and Mariana had once attended: a friend not in Treherne's

set. She sent a note to the Travellers, and to his lodgings in Stratton Street, to give the number of the box and apprise him that she was going. It was her first "gaiety" since she returned to England; and nothing but her father's sorrowful and puzzled countenance, repeating over and over again, "You, my love, who used to be so fond of the opera; I thought it would do you good," would have induced her to accept the offer.

She went; and found herself in the tier above the grand tier, almost immediately over the box Lady Eudocia used to occupy, and, nearly opposite the French Ambassador's, where, as on a former occasion, Milly Nesdale was conversing with some diplomatic notabilities. Treherne also was there during part of the evening. It is true he did not stay very long: he did not seem very gay or conversable; he did not look much at the stage or much round the house; but sat awhile playing with Lady Nesdale's fan, and tapping it to the music on the edge of the box. Beatrice watched him: she felt hot and angry, though she guessed he had not got her note, and did not know she was there. Presently Treherne looked round the house with his opera-glass: but he saw nothing

apparently to interest him. He laid the glass down, leaned back, half yawned, and resumed the fan. Lady Nesdale took it from him with a rather pettish impatience; indeed she almost snatched it from his hand, and spoke to him apparently with some ill-humour. He answered crossly: that Beatrice was sure of; she knew the expressions of his countenance. Then he sat in silence, looking vaguely round the house. Lady Nesdale again spoke to him—something a little sneering, Beatrice thought, for he looked angry, and rose almost immediately, tossing back his hair, as he did when he was "saucy and scornful," as his cousins termed it, and holding out his hand as if to wish Lady Nesdale good night. She did not take his hand. How dare she refuse it? How dare she take it? She only shrugged her slender shoulders, and bit the top of her fan, and looked half round as he left the box. Then she talked and laughed with two gentlemen who remained: then for a while whenever the door opened she looked round, as though she expected some one—expected *him* to return, Beatrice thought: then at last she ceased to look round; and over that otherwise attractive face

there came so evil an expression, that Beatrice dropped her glass as if she had seen a bad vision: something in it reminded her of Mrs. Myra Grey—but worse.

For ten minutes or more after Treherne had quitted that box, Beatrice's heart beat quick, for she thought perhaps he had seen her, and was coming round; but the evening past, and he did not reappear.

Scarcely could she speak of it next day without tears, when they met. That vision of being nothing to him—she that was his wife—vowed to him for ever!

Treherne was a little sombre and impatient.

"It is precisely because I was thinking so much of you, Beatrice, that I did not see you! if I had been making that staring tour of inspection through my glass, which used to amuse me before I saw the face that makes one think all other beauty imperfect, I should have picked you out in your eyrie, and come to you fast enough; but when I cannot see *you*, it seems to me there is nothing left to look at anywhere. I did not stay. The woman in whose box I was, tormented me with *persiflage* about my low spirits, and I went to the club."

"Yes—Lady Nesdale—she looked very cross after you were gone. Do you—do you see her often now?"

"Who has been talking to you about Lady Nesdale?" said Treherne, sharply.

"The sister of Mr. Wollingham said something about her—said that you admired her—one night when I was in Lady Eudocia's box."

"She is a gossiping idiot."

Nothing more was said; and, but for Treherne's tone and manner, perhaps Beatrice would have thought little. But the sudden sharpness—the inquiring look—the "Who has been talking to you about Lady Nesdale?"—fell on her heart like the drifting of sleet and snow.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE DREADFUL DAY.

THERE are days in some lives which are so full of pain, that no term of after-years, no joy or peace of after-granting, can enable us to think of them without a shudder, even to the last hour of existence. Such a day came to Beatrice.

It began brightly—more brightly than usual days; for midshipman Owen came home from sea, reported to the Admiralty for most gallant daring and presence of mind, by which he had saved the lives of eight seamen. Gladdening the troubled home with his bounding step and sunburnt smile and sparkling eyes, and the giving and receiving of a thousand welcomes,—and talking as fast and eagerly as if (as indeed was the fact) he had to compress into a day or two all he had to communicate, and so be off again on

the tossing waves, his ship having already her sailing orders. Sitting with his arm round that dear father's neck who had suffered such anxiety since he saw him last—with the old joyous laugh, and the frank daring spirit, and the boyish fervency of love—as on the sands of Tenby when they were keeping his birthday—when first they saw Treherne.

And the Lewellyns were in London for a couple of days; passing on with Sir Bertie's dying brother, to get by slow degrees to the south; but sparing time from those busy days to visit the Brooke family, to whom in all these past weeks and months Lady Eudocia had not vouchsafed further notice.

Sparing time, even at the risk of shortening the visits Lady Diana had to pay to both her haughty sisters: to the Marchioness, who had glittered and paraded through the London season so covered with "recollections of the Holy Land" in the form of embroidered scarfs, amber rosaries, and uncut rubies, that she resembled a richly-loaded stall in a Constantinople bazaar:—and to the fierce mother of gentle Helen Wollingham and the four other golden-haired

disappointments, who had sent before daybreak, the morning after Sir Bertie's arrival, to impress on him the necessity of visiting Helen. For Helen had "knocked up" in the middle of her London season, and now spent her evenings lying on the sofa, having books read to her (her eyes being weak and her head easily tired) which task Mr. Maurice Lewellyn had been kind enough very often to perform.

She said nothing of Beatrice; and when Sir Bertie, in pursuance of the summons, visited the beautiful invalid, he asked if she had seen much of her Tenby friend. Helen only shook her head sadly; and Lady Eudocia indulged in some haughty mutterings about "the extreme indiscretion" of Beatrice's conduct—walking all over the town without a servant—and the "altogether discreditable" position of Captain Brooke's affairs.

Sir Bertie "spoke up," as the poor people call it, for his old friend Captain Brooke. He told Lady Eudocia he did not believe a more honourable man existed; that as to his affairs, they were likely to be settled tolerably well; that he himself had bought the little property

of The Home, and trusted to regain his old neighbour if only as his tenant. That young Owen had greatly distinguished himself by his courageous conduct in the wreck of the ship "Enterprise"—had saved the lives of eight of the crew, and shown a gallantry worthy of the race he came of. That as to Beatrice, he understood she had been abroad with the Greys; but thought the Wollinghams might have seen something of her since her return.

Sir Bertie left the house arm-in-arm with his son, and spoke to him of Beatrice; but Maurice did not seem to know much about her. He said Lady Eudocia's caprice and haughtiness had prevented any further companionship between the girls; and he thought Beatrice altered for the worse, both in looks and spirits,—"so that Helen Wollingham had the less loss;" which appeared the important point in his eyes.

Lady Diana Lewellyn was waiting luncheon for them, when they came in, and she looked up with a more anxious seriousness than generally brooded on her pleasant countenance.

"Bertie," she said, "I am just come from seeing the Brookes. I congratulated them about

the boy. Fine sunburnt creature, he was there, and blushed like a harvest-maiden; my heart yearned to him; the simplicity of a child, and the bravery and good sense of a grown man was in all he said. He will be a great credit to them. But Beatrice" (and she shook her head sorrowfully), "I never saw a girl so altered, either in looks or spirits—so nervous that I thought she would have fainted when we first met—and so sallow and languid. Her father is waiting most anxiously to see you, and see what you think about her. She persisted she was perfectly well, but it is no such thing; and I give you my word, he seemed to care more for his chance of having your opinion about Beatrice, than about the news that you were the purchaser of The Home, though he was a good deal shaken, poor soul, when I told him that, and that we hoped to meet again this autumn. So you are to go, you dear Esculapius, and make everybody well and happy again; and get just such a hurried scrap of luncheon as I have often seen you do before you were such a grandee, and had half forsaken your profession: when people sent for you every minute of the day and night, as if you could live without food and without sleep."

And Dumpty leaned her white matronly hand on Esculapius's shoulder and kissed his grand intellectual forehead (with astonishing familiarity, considering the rather severe countenance of that eminent physician), and helped him to cutlets and mashed potatoes, and a glass of wine, with a glad nimbleness that might have done credit to that serviceable domestic fairy of Scotch tradition, "the Brownie;" after which Esculapius took his hat and cane and departed to see the Brookes.

It was all joy at first; joy and the triumph of giving joy; a hearty clinging grasp of the hand from the old officer,—with his redeemed chances of life and troubles got over, though at heavy sacrifice; smiles and blushes from the glad sunburnt young face which Dumpty's kind heart had "yearned to;" the "middy" who stood there so modest in his burst of boyish fame, perhaps to take rank some day among England's naval heroes. Joy in the glistening thankfulness of Mariana's star-like eyes, as she stretched out both her hands to welcome the loyal friend, the wise counsellor, the restorer of home days.

But Beatrice, bright Beatrice, your share of joy; why is it so disturbed, so fearful, so shrinking?

Why, when the gay greeting and the earnest congratulations about Owen, — the giving up of lease-papers for future explanation,—and the tender grave talk with Mariana are all ended, —and Captain Brooke rises to withdraw with his other children, and says with a nervous smile, "Now you must see what ails my pet of The Home, that we may have nothing left to be anxious about:" — why does she fly after him exclaiming so eagerly, "Nothing ails me, father, nothing —nothing!" and lean panting against the door he closed, looking wildly at Sir Bertie Lewellyn, with half-defiance and half-despair in her lovely startled eyes?

Is the grave physician called upon "to minister to a mind diseased?" Has he some magic scalpel which can dissect the human heart, and learn why it beats so fast with terror among protecting friends? Is he an adverse counsel come to cross-examine her and compel her to bear witness even against herself?

Alas! for Beatrice.

The questioning is over. The brief, grave, (increasingly grave) questioning: the hurried, contradictory, downcast, and vainly-false replies.

There is silence; deep silence; no more words. You can hear the faint breathing of Beatrice, and the booming of a bee that has found its way in to visit the white roses Lady Diana brought an hour ago. You can hear the tick of the French clock as it creeps to the stroke of four and strikes immediately afterwards, with a gush of trivial merry little bells. And lastly, you can hear — and it makes Beatrice start as if it were a loud sentence of condemnation — a sigh, deep and sad, the sigh of a good man heartily sorry for his neighbour's grief,—from Captain Brooke's true friend, Sir Bertie Lewellyn.

He draws nearer to Beatrice; he speaks in an undertone; he does not offer her a chair, though she seems faint and trembles. He only says these words: "Unhappy girl, have you thought at all what to do under these miserable circumstances? What plans have you made?

Silence. The bee still hovers among the roses; the minutes go by on the clock.

"Are you in the position of those who abjure friends who would die for them, to trust hired strangers? Beatrice Brooke, I charge you, by your duty to God, confess to your father, and let

us help you at least past the chance of public disgrace!"

He stops; he watches that abashed girl. But Beatrice is not a girl. She is a woman; a woman and a WIFE; a wife about to become a MOTHER. She lifts her eyes and answers; her voice is husky and low, but there is a passionate authoritativeness in the tone in which she says:

"I charge *you* not to meddle between my father and me; not for the sake of my own destiny, but for those to whom I am bound; those who have my solemn promise! There is nothing to tell my father; nothing to tell anyone. I have no sin to reproach myself with."

Silence again. Silence that has a sense of stifling in it.

Sir Bertie breaks it. "Are you *married*? Believe me, whatever be the circumstances—however unsatisfactory your choice—even if that choice were beneath you—"

No; he sees it is not that: the proud lip, the scornful shake of the head, the quivering lashes over the downcast eyes, they answer him, but not the voice. Yet he did not ask to whom, but only, "*Are you married?*"

How could she tell him she was married? Tell Montagu's great secret to *him*—the father of the next heir under that "tangled will!" How could she so betray her promises to *her* child's father?

The physician watches her still; he sees the change to tenderness in that expressive face — he hopes; he does not know her thoughts. He speaks to her again; very gently, very softly. Mothers, in whose houses he has made his visits, know that tone; it is the sound of his voice when he lingers by the bedside of some dying child.

"Beatrice," the sweet grave voice says, "I have known you ever since you were born; and your father, and your poor dead mother; can I wish to wound or distress you? I wish to save you. My wife will come to you; in the tender generosity of her perfect nature you may find it easier to confide than in me. Fear no worldliness in *her*, as in her sisters. She belongs to no sectional or special world, but to that of the good and true. Let us save you! Let there be some explanation with your father, and you shall go abroad with us. You say you have not sin to reproach yourself with. Beatrice, if there is no sin, let there be

no shame. For him, for you, for Mariana; for that brave bright boy, returned by God's mercy from scenes of shipwreck and danger with the dawn of that best species of fame, the fame of having fearlessly done his duty. For your father's, your sister's, your young brother's sake — Beatrice!"

Beatrice has broken down; she is melted to tears and sobs of passionate distress; she clasps the hands extended towards her as though she were drowning, and presses her bowed forehead on them, weeping bitterly. A minute more, he thinks, and she will own all — this young girl, this girl of seventeen!

But hearts of seventeen are strong when the master-passion is in them, and the master-passion of Beatrice's heart was love for Treherne. She recovered a certain degree of calm. She thanked Sir Bertie Lewellyn, but said it was impossible for her, under any circumstances, to leave England with him and Lady Diana. She protested once more her innocence, and declared that her daily trial was the intense desire she had to confide to her father the circumstances in which she was involved; but that she could not, "till she obtained leave."

"The sooner you obtain that leave the better, Beatrice," was the answer of the physician; and his manner froze again, with something of a sterner sadness. "I will not see your father now; I could not! Give him this note for me,—and if, by Heaven's merciful interposition, you should be led to think differently in this night's coming hours, send for me, or send for my wife — be it midnight or day-dawn — and we will come. Oh, child! say your prayers with a careful heart this night if ever you did so,—and God hear you for Christ's sake,—for if you step wrong in this dark hour, you step over a precipice of ruin."

He was gone! His note to Captain Brooke only said that he had prescribed for Beatrice, and trusted she would be better; that he was obliged to hurry away, and hoped to see the Brookes again the next day before starting. If not, God bless them till they met in Wales.

That was all. Beatrice's secret was still in her own keeping. For how long?

That very evening saw the vain barrier broken down, and the fear of the morning sealed in gloom. Captain Brooke had been sad and restless since he received Sir Stephen's note. It was

not like that kindly physician to go away without one word, however hurried, to comfort an anxious heart. Was it that he *could not* comfort him about Beatrice's health? Could it be that she was worse than they had supposed? Dying, perhaps, of decline, like her mother; she had grown so like her mother now she was so pale.

The poor officer watched her with eyes aghast and full of varying terrors, and the more he watched her, the more agitated Beatrice became. Then he tried to change his manner, and appear gay and satisfied about her health, not to frighten her; and this tender attempt made Beatrice, already shaken by weeping, scarcely refrain from tears. Then Mr. Grey came to read over the lease papers from Sir Bertie Lewellyn, and Captain Brooke conversed with him, after that was over, about his stay in Italy, and the value of land round Florence and Rome, and the modes of cultivation there.

Mr. Grey mentioned incidentally, that Dr. Bretton had been on the point of making, as he considered, a very foolish bargain, but that "luckily" an illness, a very bad fit of the gout, had prevented his attending to business. His daughters had been much alarmed about him, as Miss Beatrice

probably had told Captain Brooke, for it was while she was staying with them that his illness occurred.

Beatrice felt her ears throb with the hot dizzy blood rushing to her head; she said falteringly—"No, he was pretty well when I saw them." She hoped the expression "*staying* with them" had escaped her father. But when she looked up from her work, both her father and Mr. Grey were looking at her—the one with an expression of puzzled sorrow, the other with the keenest scrutiny. She felt faint, and turned ashy pale. The conversation changed. They spoke of the railways which even slothful Naples was beginning to establish; of the ease and rapidity with which journeys were made in these modern days; of the wonderful engineering of the Genoese railroad, and the Semmerung Pass in Austria. "Yes, the Austrian roads are wonderful," Mr. Grey said, "and so are their steamers. The day I was waiting Miss Brooke's arrival from Trieste, I was extremely struck by the speed with which Lloyds' steamer cut her way through the water, and the excellent steering she received."

He said it on purpose; Beatrice was sure he

said it on purpose. She looked at him with an imploring glance: it was worse than vain. He showed his consciousness of it by a half contemptuous curl of the lip, and instantly added:—"That was the time I alluded to, when Dr. Bretton was so ill; when Miss Beatrice was staying at Trieste with the Brettons."

Did she ever love her father with the same yearning love as when she heard him faintly answer, "Yes;" and then clearing his throat, and looking Mr. Grey timidly in the face, begin to make some observation about our progress in steam machinery,—with that vague smile which people put on, who are suffering from some sharp inward vexation.

No one was deceived. Beatrice felt that her father was, with chivalrous tenderness, protecting her from some attempt to show her up even to himself. The experienced solicitor saw that for some cause or other Captain Brooke had been kept entirely in the dark as to his daughter's visit to Trieste, and he instantly doubted whether she had been to the Brettons at all. If not, *where*? If not with them, *with whom*? It was not a small thing to the solicitor, what other arrange-

ments Treherne had made if he had *not* placed Miss Brooke with these friends. His mind ranged with natural quickness, and professional skill, over the minutest circumstances which surrounded what he felt had been A LIE; and he would, perhaps, have dug further round that evil plant to find its very roots, but that Captain Brooke availed himself of the pause in the conversation courteously to end it, saying, "I am a good deal fatigued, Mr. Grey, and my girl is not very well, so, perhaps, you will have some warm wine and water, and say good-night."

But after he was gone, Captain Brooke turned towards his daughter and said, "Something has happened abroad, my Beatrice, which I am not to know. Something vexatious to you, which your old father is not to be told;" and he looked as if he thought she would now tell it.

Who could bear it? Who could bear the plaintive kindly tone? the frank anxious gaze? the conviction of the pain that was busy in that unselfish heart?

The tears trembled in Beatrice's eyes; the words trembled on her lips; the vision floated through her mind of falling at his feet and owning

all; and then the vision of bringing Montagu there, to tell him all,—*to-morrow.*

To-morrow!

Slowly and with effort Captain Brooke withdrew the pitiful asking glance from his young daughter's face. Again the horrid thought passed through his mind that perhaps she had been very ill; perhaps she had broken a blood-vessel, like her mother, and did not wish him to know it. She did look so *very* unwell, and somehow less carefully and prettily dressed, less upright and active. He covered his face with his hands.

"Never mind, love," he said; "I'm sorry the conversation troubled you. Reach me a gazetteer, I want to see what sort of distance those Austrian fellows would have to cut through for their Semmerung Pass."

Beatrice looked up at the shelf where the dictionaries and gazetteers were placed — it was a little beyond her reach; she put a footstool in front of the book-case, and stretched her arm upwards, hesitating which was the volume. Owen looked up and rose to help her: he laughed.

"Ah! Beatrice," he said, "you would not beat me at a race *now*; you that were once so nimble!

You are grown fat, and pale, and lazy, and quite an old lady."

While he was yet speaking, Beatrice felt a great dizziness; her arm dropped by her side; her eyes swam; but in all the dizziness and swimming, she was somehow conscious, as in a dreadful dream, of the expression of her father's face, who had also risen and stood as it were transfixed, gazing at her; he stretched his trembling hand; he was pointing at her!—turning to Mariana and pointing. As he did so, a cry escaped him. There is a cry given by those who are suddenly stabbed: neither a shriek nor a groan, but a combination of shriek and groan stifled and stopped. That was the cry that Beatrice heard—the cry from a man's heart, stabbed by a terrible conviction. She dropped from where she stood, like a shot bird; she fell crouching at his feet; she flung her arms wildly round his knees, and she gasped out—"I am *married*, father. I am married, but it was not to be owned!"

He thrust her from him; his beautiful Beatrice; his Pet of The Home. He thrust her from him; and stood there, stern and staring, (he whom they

had never seen stern!) while Mariana's large serene eyes dilated with pitying wonder, and the startled boy vainly flung himself across his father's breast and called the dear name loudly, as if to call him back to the real, from some fearful unreal world he was contemplating with that fixed dreadful gaze.

"Father, father, what *do* you think you see?"

The father saw the spectre that can blight the happiest hearth: the dark shadow—SHAME.

CHAPTER XXIII.

UNDER THE SPELL.

"A CHILD of mine married, and not owned!"

These were the first words he spoke; and they were glad he spoke, though they were uttered so fiercely, with set teeth, and clenched hands.

"Married—but not owned. WHO IS THE MAN?"

He struck that question out as though he had struck it on an anvil. And his children saw then that miracle we sometimes behold, of youth brightening over an old and faded face; when, as by some strange gleam, we perceive what that face was, and must have been, in its glory! The brave open brow flushed through the full tingling veins; the cheek kindled; the eye flashed fire; for a moment you saw what he had been: you saw the young officer whose dauntless arm swept down his country's foes and shielded his dying

comrade's helpless hour, amid the roar of the battle, and the hail of red-hot shot.

Who is the man? Where is this enemy of peace? give up his name to the Avenger!

It was but for a moment. The glory faded, like the stormlight off a hill. The strength and brightness vanished, you knew not where, and a pale, powerless, broken-hearted old man stood before them, who, stretching his arms vaguely towards Mariana, sank down in his seat again with a querulous burst of tears. "Oh God! more shame — worse shame!" he said.

Beatrice crept towards him: the sweet welcome voice he loved so—where was it? Was it hers, that hoarse whisper from the feverish lips that came so near his cheek, yet dared not kiss him?

"Be patient with me, father; I will be no shame to you; I will be no grief to you. I am married. I love him. He loves me. All will be right, dear father, if you will but take patience with me! To-morrow, he shall come and explain why, even to you, and sore against my will, and only for a time, our marriage was to be kept secret."

"For what time, Beatrice?"

"Two years; scarcely two years; less, now."

"Who is your husband? I guess. I know who has done this."

"Father, give me till to-morrow,— only till to-morrow!"

"Beatrice, if all is true, and you regret to have hidden (alas! how skillfully) from a father who so dearly loved his child, the most important step of your life,—hear me now. If your husband comes here and claims you openly to-morrow; and gives me any shadow of reason, which, backed by youth and rashness, may seem to excuse what has occurred, I will strive to forgive what I never can forget, in his theft of you! When, or how, he stole the daughter of an imprisoned man, I have yet to learn,—and you will tell me nothing."

"He will; *he* will, dear father,— only wait till to-morrow. I promised him so solemnly. Give me only till to-morrow."

"If, on the other hand, he does not make that poor amends,—I hold you bound, until the time expires which you say is to end this disgraceful position, not to see him. You must live with us in seclusion and widowhood, till he chooses honourably to own you as his wife."

"Oh, Beatrice, yes! with us — with us — safe with *us*," murmured Mariana, as she drew her closer to her bosom. "Safe with us, as in the old quiet days: safe in The Home, and wait there."

The quiet days! Alas! could they return? Can the river roll back to its source?

Could the peace of girlhood come again? Even now, while they spoke, she yearned for it; yearned to be out of her trouble, in her father's kindly arms; yearned to see once more on Mariana's face, that sweet and placid smile,—the smile of an approving angel, of a canonised saint,—instead of that look of distress and wonder. But the child's heart was at war with the woman's. Give her only till to-morrow!

Reader, have you ever loved,—untowardly, rashly, it may be wrongfully? Have you ever sate listening — no, not listening, but *conscious of words*; conscious of advice, or scorn, or scolding, or imploring, of some flow of sentences from human lips, addressed to you; intended to sway you, and alter the course and current of that love; and have you, through all that louder sounding of syllables, heard as it were an undertone (like the chorded accompaniment in music) of some dearer voice; felt the warm flickering

over your soul of a smile for whose sake you would die; seen, as in a vision, the light on the beloved forehead, the love-look from the welcome eyes, and felt the pressure of that hand which is the link between you and happiness—which to surrender, never to clasp again, would be simply the blank and bitterness of death?

Have you listened so, and heard nothing,—though you knew you ought to hear; though you strove to bow your heart and calm your thoughts, and strain your wandering mind, from the oppressive knowledge that those who were speaking thus, did it from deep conviction,— did it "for your good," —had perhaps some holy undeniable right to be heard, and a claim to your reverential attention? And have you, so knowing, so thinking, and so striving, nevertheless felt,—with a sort of passionate despair,—that, stronger than all reasoning, reverence, or conviction, was *the spell* that bound you to—

The one loved name!

Even so sate Beatrice that summer evening, with those she loved, and reverenced, and grieved for — thinking of Treherne! Like Faust's poor Margaret, his love, his smiles, his

wooing words, and the "ach seine kuss" of earthly passion, overbore her, even while reproaching herself for the feeling, and admitting the right to reproach her or warn her. Often such interference is mere tyranny, or mere worldly scheming; but oftener far, it is the rescue of watchful affection, to those we perceive drifting to the whirlpool. We would save them. And oh! the wonderful power to aid or prevent, that seems to lie at such times in the narrow compass of one human heart. *Seems*, for it is not so. Very rarely so; God has given to no human being full power to pilot another through the storms of life. "By your own deeds ye shall stand or fall." Vain is intimate acquaintance, deep love, accustomed authority, superiority of intellect, wisdom of age. Something of rebellion lurks in the heart of the most submissive, something of mystery in the hearts of the most prosaic. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger intermeddleth not with its joy." And until the sentence shall be reversed, which says —

> Not even the tenderest heart, and next our own,
> Knows half the reasons why we smile or sigh,

so it must ever be.

Beatrice listened with tearful reverence to her father's words at this evil time. She knew that all was true, *or would be true in other cases*, which he proceeded to say so mournfully,—of the unfair and disgraceful position which such a marriage entailed; of the selfish rashness of the man who thus seized love as a greedy prey, instead of waiting for a betrothed bride: of the inexcusable duplicity which was imposed on her by the unholy promise she had given him. She knew it was true, *or would be true in other cases*, that the bond of wedlock was one to be more piously and patiently considered, if they were to expect God's blessing upon it. But in this one especial case? If her father knew all,—when he should know all? Give her only till to-morrow!

The voice of her father in blame of him she loved with such a blind, infatuated passion — the voice of Mariana, from time to time, in brief sweet sentences of comfort or petition — these went on: and her slender fingers were twined in her sister's, and her weary head leaned on her sister's shoulder, while through all came vivid recollections of the moonlight at Venice, the illness at that desert station, the strange tangling

will, the jesting of Treherne about the stories of unhappy Arabella Stuart and the Duchess of York, the excuses — his excuses, and her own, and the hope that "*to-morrow*" would satisfy her father.

But above all, and through all, and over all, the dread of being parted from Treherne; the dread of leaving this idol, for the life pictured to her of widowhood and seclusion, for two lonely years.

To leave him! to be utterly away from him— she that fevered over the annoyance of not living in the same house with him; of not seeing him every spare hour of the day; of not having the full measure and joy of home domestic life under her new domestic bond! Not to see him *at all!* to leave him to his London life of business and temptation; to leave him to Milly Nesdale! to her sneers at his low spirits! to her comforting if he should be sad.

HER comforting!

Beatrice gave such a start as this thought crossed her, her soft eyes looked so wildly from her father to her sister, that the latter said, tenderly; "Oh! my dear, are you in pain?"

And her father abruptly added, "Rest—rest, my dear; she needs rest. We all need rest. God send it!" and left the apartment.

He said no more: he never turned his head as he left the room; there was no "good-night" among them. It was the first time in all those hitherto loving happy lives, they had parted so.

"My Beatrice! my Beatrice! my dear dear sister!" broke from the young midshipman, as he threw his arms round her, and mingled his sobs with hers. The fearless heart that dared the storm, and whose courage had saved eight lives, melted, as such hearts always do; and the three young creatures grieved together; and then spoke eager words of loving comfort, and built up at last, mid smiles and tears, a castle in the air, whose topmost tower was bright even to dazzling, in the sunshine of To-MORROW.

CHAPTER XXIV.

AN IMPATIENT HEART.

To-morrow! But Beatrice could not wait for the to-morrow. Weary and beat and ill as she was, that child of impulse and passion no sooner found herself in the tranquillity of her own room, than the hours that intervened between her and the decision of her fate seemed to stretch to an eternity.

She opened the window and leaned against it; but the withering mignonette brought no freshness, and the racket of all the night whirlings and wheelings of London beat on her brain like an echo of the turmoil of thought already there. She turned from the window and sank on her knees in prayer — in earnest prayer,

for direction, for forgiveness, for grace. But calm was lost; action, action only, could tranquillise that restless mind. There are moods in which such natures feel that to be passive would send them mad! The night — those ten or twelve lazy careless hours — what was it to wait one night? Yet to her it seemed a year — a lifetime, — to wait till morning. Treherne might be out before he got any note she sent; he might not know of what importance it was that he should come; for how could she explain why she sent for him? She must see him NOW. If she could see him, if only for ten minutes, — then she could rest, — perhaps sleep; and she passed her hand feverishly over her aching brow. She *must* see him.

She stole softly to her brother's room: "Are you in bed, Owen?"

"Oh no, my dearest; I am not even undressed. I was sitting still thinking of you!"

"Owen, if you ever loved me, do not reason with me at all about the favour I am going to ask you. I want to go out. It is not really very late; not very late for London; not more than eleven; not later than half the people are setting out for balls. Do not disturb my father. You must guess

who it is I want to see. Dear, I am too miserable to wait my opportunity of seeing him to-morrow, after what has passed to-night with my father. The servant is in bed; go softly down and get a cab round to the door, and sit up for me in the dining-room. No one will see, no one will know; and to-morrow he will come here, and all the distress, please God, will be over."

The young midshipman sighed, but departed on his commission without answering a word. He handed Beatrice into the cab, and held her hand for one detaining moment: "May I not even accompany you? Oh, Beatrice! *are* you going alone?"

"To-morrow, Owen, you will be both brothers acknowledged: to-morrow!"

She tried to smile, and the boy stood wistfully looking after her; he heard her tell the driver to go to "Stratton Street," and went in to wait.

Beatrice also had to wait. She had reached the number in the street where Treherne had apartments before she recollected that she would have to knock and ring like any other visitor to obtain admittance. She had always been accompanied by Treherne himself when she went there. The

sleepy maid-servant who answered the ring, asked who she desired to see, and told her Mr. Treherne was not yet returned from dining out. "Could I —could I wait in the drawing-room?"

"Certainly, Miss."

It was near two o'clock when Beatrice at last heard Treherne come in. He had his latch-key, and passed up-stairs without giving time for the servant to have announced her. Beatrice's agitation was redoubled by hearing some second person, some gentleman, also entering with Treherne. She heard him say, "Shall I give you a cigar?" She moved rapidly across the room, thinking to escape into the inner apartment; but the young men were more rapid still, and as the door opened she stood face to face with Treherne and Maurice Lewellyn! The amazement of the latter was so great that he did not attempt to speak. Beatrice also trembled; she was without her bonnet, which she had taken off on first coming in, in the vain hope to cool her aching head. Treherne was excessively discomposed, but he instantly addressed her: "Is your father—is Captain Brooke ill, or in danger? Has any misfortune happened? What

can I do for you? I am sorry I was not here earlier."

But this assumption of being merely "a family friend," however gracefully executed, failed to restore composure to either of his companions. Beatrice only answered faintly, "Yes, something has occurred—I wished to consult you—my father is not exactly ill—;" she stopped, looking helplessly at Treherne's face; and Maurice Lewellyn, in an agitated voice, said, "I will wish you good-night, Montagu." He seemed to make an effort to say something also to Beatrice, but failed, and abruptly departed.

"Oh, my Beatrice, how mad! how foolish! and how ill you look! What in the name of Heaven ails you? What has happened?"

She told him all. All—and that she had undertaken for him that he would declare their marriage and his reasons for concealing it, to her father the next day.

"Beatrice! you have ruined us both; if you had had patience for the future yet but a little while! What you ask is impossible."

"I tell you, Montagu, I have suffered such torture, concealing this from my father, that

dreadful as to-day has been, it is a relief to me to have told him! Even now I have not named you; but he cannot doubt whose name I bear. You cannot tell (my own dear heart, you were an orphan so soon!) you cannot tell what it is to have concealments from these dear and near ties."

"There was LOVE in Eden before there were other ties," said Treherne, wildly; "and if you loved me, under all our difficulties, you would think of nothing *but* that love! It should suffice you though all others failed you upon earth. It should suffice you though no tie but that love held us together. As to parting us—but you will not leave me—you cannot leave me."

"Does my father wish us parted? Does he ask so hard a thing? Only that you should come to him; explain to him; he will forgive; he will keep our secret."

"He asks—what is impossible!"

Beatrice rose from her seat; she trembled from head to foot; she leaned one hand on the back of her chair as if to steady her from falling as she made one step towards Treherne,—and then she said passionately, almost fiercely, "I must be owned —I WILL be owned as your wife—to my father!"

She sank back into the seat she had occupied, and both looked silently at each other. Then Beatrice said faintly, with closed eyes and pallid lips, "Oh! forgive my way of saying it! I have passed such a miserable maddening day."

All that caresses and gentle words could do to soothe her was done by him to whom she owed that day of trial; and then he besought her (as she had besought her father) to "give him till to-morrow" to consider what to say; he begged her to come there at midday on the morrow, and to let him reconduct her now to her own home.

The door of home opened swiftly and softly, as the cab turned into the street, for the young brother was waiting—watching and listening till dawn, as though he kept the night-watch on the deck of his ship. He saw his pale exhausted sister assisted down by Montagu Treherne, who waited till the house door was closed and drove away as he had come, and Owen's heart beat with joy for he felt that now "all would come right." He gave Beatrice a glad silent embrace as she stole into her own room, and he sank into the light sleep of boyhood, with a happy trust in the morrow.

CHAPTER XXV.

WHAT THE MORROW BROUGHT FORTH.

THE morrow is come,—warm, sunny, and glorious, even in a London sky,—with just breeze enough to send the perfume of the flowers in well-filled balconies and the baskets of itinerant vendors, across the streets. Something of the feeling of Romeo, when in ill-fulfilled anticipation of joy, he exclaims—

> And all this day an unaccustomed spirit
> Lifts me above the ground with cheerful thoughts—

swelled in Beatrice's heart. Something of the over-gladness that in the ancient Scotch superstition is called being "fey," and is supposed to be the forerunner of disaster. That joyous spirit of girlhood, depressed by the position of perpetual

mystery and vexation, rose to the sweet vision of reconciliation and home joy. They had all agreed, Mariana, Owen, and Beatrice, that it was impossible Captain Brooke would not forgive his pet of The Home, and cherish her husband, when the excusing circumstances should be made known; which as yet Beatrice had told to no one, but which all were to know this sunshiny day.

Still pale with the excessive agitation of the preceding night, but with this gladness on her eager half-smiling lips and in her languid eyes, Beatrice walked swiftly across St. James's Park, absently dreaming of the return walk she might perhaps make with HIM, her husband; to see him and her father at last together as father and son! He had begun, it is true, by saying that her father asked an impossibility, but afterwards he had yielded. He was merely to take the night to consider how to declare his marriage; and now that Maurice Lewellyn had seen her at his lodgings, there would be little possibility of concealment. Her father had gone out to breakfast with Mr. Grey, and to see people on business afterwards. She had not seen him since the previous night; she did not wish to see him till she could stand

in his presence with her husband. That would be very soon.

So dreaming, she passed through the narrow gate of the Park at the crossing to Stratton Street, hustling as she passed against another absent little Alnaschar, in the shape of an Italian boy, whose pardon she begged, with a smile and a sixpence, and received from him in return a rapid blessing, calling on God and all the saints and the Santa Madonna, to guard her to joy. Beatrice thought it a good omen to be blessed in that dear Italian tongue (her mother's language), and the stage of the opera house in the Venetian moonlight was vividly before her, as she stood on the step of Montagu's door in Stratton Street, and crossed that threshold of her hope.

She was rather startled at the servant handing her a note in Treherne's handwriting. It contained only the words—"There is a letter for you in the glass Venetian casket in the drawing-room, of which you have the duplicate key. I wished you to read it here, quietly, before I see you.—Yours ever, M." He did not say when he would be home.

Beatrice ascended the staircase with a trembling

step; an instinctive dread that all was not to be as she had pictured it, in the coming day, stole over her. The servant said, Mr. Treherne had desired, if the lady called, that she should be shown into the drawing-room, and that she would find pen, ink, and paper there, if she wished to write before he returned.

She locked the door, sat down, and drew the bright Venetian casket towards her. For some seconds she remained staring wistfully at it; at its delicate spiral-threaded workmanship, and faint purple and crimson stripes, through which, like white clouds, the contents might be seen—trifles which she and Montagu had placed there; one or two gems in intaglio; some dried flowers from the scanty store in the Botanical Garden at Venice; a chaplet of olive seeds with silver beads between, which the meek little Nubian servant had timidly pressed on her acceptance when the nursing of her illness was over and the plenteous unexpected reward for her service bestowed; scented charms and engraved talismans; and the miniature pages of a tiny missal. You might have thought some idle connoisseur was gazing at that casket.

But the letter also was there. The letter! Some letter he wished her to read before they met. Some difficulty—something painful; she felt sure of that. Well, whatever it was, she must read it. It was there, lying among the other papered and unpapered trifles that made the dim cloud, sheltered by that delicate glass covering. She unlocked the casket, and took the letter; it lay on the surface of the other packets. The address, "To Beatrice," was in Treherne's handwriting. So were the contents.

"My dearest Beatrice,—

"If I could better bear the giving you pain, I should have waited for you; and put into words what I now put into writing. But I shrink from the thought of tears from your lovely eyes,—and from those passionate explanations which distress people without altering the condition of things discussed. I also cannot help alluding (though not, believe me, with reproach) to the gleam of violence in your manner, when you said to me, 'I WILL be owned as your wife.' I have always had the impression, I scarce know how, that you could be very violent; and no

one ever dreaded 'scenes' of any kind more than I do.

"I might have reminded you when you took this tone with me, how contrary it was to your own vowed promise of submission at Trieste, where you solemnly declared that my will should be your will; but I pass that by, because I have also reproaches to make to myself. I pass also the great annoyance and probable injury to me, of your meeting Maurice Lewellyn here (who will of course immediately tell his father, and the Wollinghams, and so publish it to my family), because I would not be so unjust as to reproach you with an accident you could not foresee, when you adopted the unfortunate resolution of coming without notice to Stratton Street. I come at once to the heavy reproach I have to make myself, and which, Heaven knows, entitles you to every indulgence, even if I did not love you as passionately as I do.

"You over-rate every claim you have upon me, except that love! The trying moment when you spoke so imperiously of your determination to compel my visit to your father, is the first and only moment that I have wavered

in my regret for the position we *really* stand in towards each other,—which is simply this, Beatrice, that we are not, as you suppose, man and wife! You are not married to me. The reading of the marriage ceremony, at the time of your deplorable illness, was the result of a frenzied anxiety to soothe and save you. The person who read it was not even in holy orders. A medical opinion had been given that you would most probably die, unless something could be contrived to alter the state of excitement and dejection you were in. There is no doubt that your life was saved by that deception. You will say, 'why continue it? Why not tell me when I was better?' Think back on that time yourself, Beatrice. Our first object, after the delays of that unexpected voyage and most inopportune illness, was to get back as soon as possible to Trieste. I confess at first I was amazed that you were so well satisfied with the sort of ceremony that had been performed; I expected that you yourself would request its repetition in some church. You did not. The only observation you ever made was, that we had been more sorrowfully and strangely united than Gretna Green lovers. I put off telling you the real state

of the case till we should be at Trieste. I was so happy—(*we* were so happy, Beatrice!)—that I dreaded the breaking-up of that joy, till we could follow the mock marriage with a real one. When we reached Trieste, you know yourself that Mr. Grey's letter scarcely left us hours—far less days—to secure the important object of your return with him and his wife. I was *afraid* to tell you then. Afraid of I scarce knew what; of your passion and vehemence; of your recklessly determining on remaining with me till we were married, instead of catching at the providential opportunity of concealing all that had occurred. I thought I could infinitely better arrange for such a marriage after I had returned to London, and had rejoined you there apparently in the same position as when you left home. I let you depart without making the confession; and yet, I swear to you, it was the narrowest chance in the world. You may remember how you stood, comforting me for our parting—assuring me you could part cheerfully and gaily, knowing we were to spend our lives together—and how dejected I was.

"That dejection was not for our parting, but for the heavy secret at my heart! I was on the point

of telling you. Your very cheerfulness deterred me. That,—and the brief time we had, to resolve anything. I thought, 'why break up this sunny calm into a storm which may wreck us?' The thought of your countenance (you never looked more beautiful, Beatrice!) changing to resentment and tears,—and, above all, as I have already told you, the fear of your determining to stay,— conquered my impulse.

"When we met in town, your father's release from prison, and other circumstances, combined to put more difficulties in the way of our meeting than I had foreseen. My aunt Eudocia and Mr. Grey kept a perpetual inquisition into my engagements and habits of life. I thought when they should leave town, and the season be over, and the swarm of the world's fools dispersed who make everybody's business their own, we might then be quietly united. And from time to time I confess the idea of deferring the more solemn ceremony till I was of age, and could both marry you and openly take you home, occurred to my mind as the most prudent course.

"These are the causes which render it impossible for me to declare our marriage to your

father—or, as you expressed it, to own you for my wife. No ceremony could make you dearer to me than that melancholy reading by your sick-bed. I feel for ever bound to you by that; and in spite of the complications of our affairs in consequence of your imprudence last night, and of your declaration to your father,—I put my trust in your love, and look forward to the future. I shall return from Putney (where I have purposely gone to spend the day with a friend, that you may have time to grow calm, and collect yourself) to-night or to-morrow early; and if you will come to Stratton Street, I will watch for you, and Heaven knows with what grateful joy I shall receive you and consult with you as to possibilities. If you feel resentment and bitterness,—and cannot at once forgive what after all has been the result of one unhappy accident after another,—leave me a note in the same casket that held this. But do not condemn me, Beatrice! Already all my destiny is perilled for your sake; and if you are wounded by my confession, remember how great is the anxiety I have to bear!

"Yours ever,

"M. T."

Impossible to write a base selfish letter with more unconsciousness!

For two hours and more, Beatrice sat immovable as a statue. She did not faint. She never shed a tear. She felt as if turned to stone. She might have remained so through the day, but that the declining sun came with a ruddy westward light and smote across her eyes with its uncurtained glow, from the high handsome window of the room. Her eyelids quivered; she drew a deep breath; she was conscious of life,—and a moan escaped her lips, as though that fading sun had the power attributed to the rising orb when it strikes on Memnon's statue in the East.

Even then she did not sink to tears. She rose and moved away out of that red glow—that glow so like the sun in a warmer land. She walked to and fro, over the rich soft carpet, with the looks of a dethroned princess. She thought she was able to calculate chances. She calculated how much was true where so much had been false. She felt that sudden distrust in all things, which the perfidy of those we love inspires. The thought stole through her brain, "What if this is only a feint, to make it seem impossible to own me

to my father?" Then she strove to remember who could *prove* what had occurred—who ever knew of it, except the parties immediately concerned.

Suddenly Beatrice stopped that pacing walk —that walk of a creature in a cage. Treherne's aunt was there, at that desert station! the Marchioness of Updown: *she* would know if the chaplain of one of our Consulates was there the same day. She, who would expect every English traveller to be in a sort of attendance upon her; who was always enquiring for news, and obtaining service. Beatrice would at least make *that* discovery. She remembered her visit to the Wollinghams which had been so painful, when every one (except Helen!) had so evidently "wished her to go away;" but she was reckless as to how she was received. She would learn whether it was possible some one in holy orders had read that solemn service in that trembling compassionate voice. It was impossible *that* could have been a deception.

Yes, she would go and see the Marchioness. And then she would return and leave a letter for Treherne in the Venetian casket. And then?

then—oh! blind, black, altered world, what is the use of looking beyond that hour?

The impulse to know the one fraction of destiny apparently within her grasp—the delirious avoidance of that passive state to which Treherne's note consigned her, taking himself off to Putney that she might "have time to grow calm"—the desire, whatever her eventful fate might be, to put it to the test,

And win or lose it all;

let her satisfy these, and then—then come what come would!

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE MARCHIONESS.

When Beatrice reached Park Lane, the most noble The Marchioness of Updown was at dinner. She was dining unusually early, for a great ball was to be given that night by the then Mistress of the Robes; a ball at which Majesty itself was to be present—"and all the *élite* of the nobility." A ball to which the Marchioness and all her diamonds and turquoises were going: with a glittering effort to outshine, at least in splendour of attire, that graceful hostess,—who, if state and station well became her, had the happiness of "Cornelia's jewels" to boot, and stood among her beautiful daughters with a soft dignity of welcome, like one of Captain Brooke's white moss roses in

full bud, bowing its head in the sunshine of a July day.

It required an amazing degree of labour to prepare for such a ball,—especially as all balls given or attended by Majesty begin a good deal earlier than more common-place entertainments of the same kind. There was a certain, though very unequal, "division of labour." That of The Marchioness's attendants consisted in preparing her elaborate costume and toiling attentively over her prolonged toilette. The Marchioness herself undertook the briefer but more important labour of "undoing the work of Time;" unpicking his seams, darning up his ravelling, festooning his plain hems; and, with regard to his restless out-door alterations, brightening up the frescoes, and levelling and covering in, wherever he had presumed, in Shakspeare's words, to

—— dig deep trenches in her beauty's field.

By calculations founded on repeated experience, it was computed that two hours and a half of this combined industry of the labouring hands and the master hand,—the practice of arts that were purely mechanical, and of those which required in

addition some knowledge of design,—all working with a good will together,—produced a most satisfactory return; for it is certain that when the wheels stopped work and the female labourers retired to rest for a while (till called at the early dawn to set wheels in motion again, and undo, like Penelope, the web of the night), The Marchioness sallied forth looking at the very least ten years younger than she really was. To the despair of many struggling contemporaries; the melancholy tone of whose voices, as they contemplated her and remarked, "How very beautifully your hair is dressed! Did you get that brocade from Palmyre?" was oil and balm to her spirit; for she knew it meant that she was looking remarkably well, and that they could not look like her, try all they would.

This time she was resolved to outdo herself. Two foreign sovereigns and a new ambassador were to appear at the ball. To appear at the ball, and consequently to behold The Marchioness. What the Fanàl is in the bay of Genoa, compared with the wreath of fainter gleamings round that lovely sea; what the orb of night was, in the opinion of the poet who complimented his

mistress at the expense of all her neighbours, apostrophising them thus, as mere stars:—

> Ye meaner beauties of the night—
> That poorly satisfy our eyes
> More by your number than your light,
> What are ye when the MOON doth rise!

what the queen-bee is in a hive—so distinguishable by her ample proportions and superior appearance, that a whole million of common bees would not prevent your noticing her—that, the Marchioness of Updown determined to be! Determined to be, and *was*: which does not always follow on the resolves of human ambition.

But as yet the toilette was not begun. The Marchioness was dining:

> The queen was in her chamber, eating bread and honey;

or, if not exactly rioting in that simple fare, eating of four savoury little dishes sent up by a French cook on Dresden china—accompanied by some excellent claret.

The ball dress was upstairs, hanging in the splendid dressing-room. Scarcely hanging either; for what with its incrustation of jewels, and what

with the richness of the shimmering stuff on which they were sown, that white and gold brocade realised the enthusiastic expression applied to such silks in female parlance, that they almost "stand alone." It was "standing alone" in the dressing-room: and for any great addition of brains or soul or heart, that it received when The Marchioness entered into it, it might have gone alone to the ball,—twirled round in the waltz,—swum about in the quadrille,—swept through the stately rooms,—descended the superb staircase,—and so have returned home again, without loss.

Meanwhile it was undeniably a very marvel of a ball dress! Jewels and agrâffes were sown down the front, and down the back, and round the ample corsâge, and among the puffed knots of the lace-trimmed sleeves, and across the skirt in an angle, and looping up the skirt at the sides —in short, wherever a jewel could be set, it *was* set. Some of the jewels were false—but nobody was supposed to know that; just as some portions of The Marchioness herself were false, and nobody was supposed to know it. The general result was glittering, magnificent, and triumphant, as the dress hung (or stood), reflected in the

great pier glass, waiting for its inhabiting form—The Marchioness.

Miss Parkes, the humble companion, was also there; in close proximity to the empty dress. Leaning her weary head against the great carved mahogany bed-post shrouded in purple silk curtains,—looking paler than ever against that purple silk: very tired in her ancles, having stood all day superintending the sewing on of the jewelled barnacles on the white and gold-embroidered hull. Resting—in a sort of dog's sleep, half awake, and half in slumber; dreaming,—with her weak little grey eyes open, and her cap awry,—of her girlhood and her mother, and a county ball at Chippenham, Wilts, where she had danced with a young lieutenant in the navy long ago forgotten by everyone but herself, who was drowned in the Caspian Sea.

And Mrs. Benson, the lady's maid, was also there, waiting upon the empty dress; less fatigued than Miss Parkes, but more flushed and excited. Very wide awake, having just fortified herself against the coming hour by a cup of tea with a little brandy in it, and with a hearty professional interest in the appearance

The Marchioness was to make that night. For Benson had a conscience—according to her idea of conscience—and a thorough lady's maid has the same noble pride in her lady's appearance, that an officer has in the review of his regiment. A belt awry, a shambling gait, a loosely buckled collar, in the soldier, cannot be more painful to his colonel, than a pin dropped from its fastening, a tape wandering out to public view, a crease in the silken folds, or a drooping flaccid "sit of the petticoat" to the Abigail of a well-bred house. Benson was "a very superior person," and she waited there, alert and unfatigued—

Her soul in arms, and eager for the fray—

which was to enable her victoriously to declare to some other Abigail, "Your lady did n't look half as well as *my* lady; nor I do n't think none of the ladies at her Grace's ball was to compare with my lady;" a boast Mrs. Benson was very often enabled to make.

Nor was Mrs. Benson without a conscience of a kindlier sort, though she reverenced marchionesses, and was very severe upon "creatures;" for she

supported a very ricketty and rheumatic old mother out of the wages given her (though they were not over liberal, considering that she did the work of two servants and a sentry, what with toiling at the toilette, and sitting up "waiting" for her lady): and at this very moment she was planning, after the fatigue of the dressing was over, to go to that old mother, and "see how the dear old soul was a gettin' on."

And Miss Parkes envied Mrs. Benson her ricketty old mother, because—to use her own phrase—"she had not a soul in the wide world that she could care for, or that cared for her." And so with their different degrees of strength and patience, both these women waited on the empty dress; besides a brown-eyed rosy-cheeked assistant, a country niece of Mrs. Benson's, to whom this chance occasion, in which she was permitted to labour, wore the mingled aspect of a festival gala and a fairy tale; and who found it, consequently, quite difficult to subdue the radiant smiles of pleasure that parted her red lips over her white young teeth — though she felt it was somehow disrespectful to smile, while so great a lady was about to put on so

grand a gown; besides that it must look "so very childish" and "so very countrified."

Ah, little Mary!—how many of the jewelled barnacles on the brocaded hull would the full-sailing Marchioness have given,—if she could have bought, at any price, those young smiles and that shy flush of colour,—and have floated victoriously into the ball-room after making them her own!

But The Marchioness was not cruising, but dining; and when the groom of the chambers said, towards the close of that meal, "Miss Beatrice Brooke called about three-quarters of an hour ago, to see your ladyship, but I told her your ladyship was at dinner," she put down the Sèvres-handled fork with which she was dividing a preserved nectarine, and exclaimed: "Called to see ME! well, I never heard of such a thing in my life."

Unmoved in his aspect (for a well-trained groom of the chambers does not participate in little fleeting family emotions, but merely adds a shade of gravity to his manner when there are family deaths), he added, "Miss Beatrice Brooke stated it to be her intention to call again,

a little later; she said it was of the greatest importance she should see your ladyship."

"Nonsense!" ejaculated The Marchioness, as she pushed her plate away.

"I therefore wished to know," said the unmoved Mr. Floris, — after allowing a genteel pause for The Marchioness to exclaim in,—"whether Miss Brooke is to be admitted, or whether she is to be told that your ladyship is dressing? I thought I had better learn your ladyship's pleasure now, instead of disturbing your ladyship after your ladyship had gone upstairs."

"Certainly, Floris, you did quite right. See me!" mused The Marchioness. "What *can* the girl want to see me about? I wonder, now, whether she can want to dispose of that set of coral?—magnificent coral. They say her father has been shockingly embarrassed. Hum! well,—yes—I think you shall say *both*, Floris; you shall say that I am dressing, and you shall say that if Miss Brooke has anything very particular to tell me—mind, *very* particular—I will see her for a few minutes in my dressing-room."

So Beatrice — after sitting in the dying light

on a bench in Hyde Park, vaguely watching the sunset; whose glory on the sweetest evening comes to us in London veiled by some odd cloud of dust and vapour, like a sunset seen through grey muslin; and after waiting the full time she thought would suffice for the luxurious little dinner of the luxurious Marchioness—came once more to the house, and was ushered from the foot of the great-hall staircase to the white floss rug at the door of the purple dressing-room; and there the groom of the chambers knocked and said, "Miss Brooke is here, my lady," and departed. And after she had waited a few minutes on the white rug, pretty Mary opened the door, dropped her little quick curtsy, with her countrified phrase of "Servant, Miss," and Beatrice stood in the presence of The Marchioness.

The room was surcharged with the perfumes of different essences and the heat of unnumbered wax lights; and the first sensation of Beatrice, who had tasted no sort of food since her hurried eight o'clock breakfast, was a deadly faintness. She struggled against it. She knew the lack of sympathy that lived in that room. She had not come

there for sympathy, but for information—information on one especial point—and when she had obtained it, she would go away.

Her eyes, which for the last hour had rested on dim crimson and grey clouds in the fading sky, wandered past the glittering toilette and the still more glittering empty dress, in search of living form—in search of the mature Columbine of this dazzling pantomime; while countrified Mary, the corners of her rosy mouth dropped to an expression of amazed pity, wondered if it would be too dreadful a liberty to offer a cup of tea out of Benson's forsaken teapot, by way of refreshment, to this wild, sick-looking, most beautiful young lady.

But now The Marchioness turned; and by turning conveyed to Beatrice's confused vision a more distinct notion of where she sat amongst all this glitter and frippery than her weary eyes had yet been able to obtain. Indeed, had Miss Brooke been a more accustomed visitor in that purple carpeted room, she would have known at once where to look for its occupant; for The Marchioness was merely sitting where she generally sat when she was not lounging in her magnificent

carriage, or lolling on her magnificent sofa,—that is, in front of her magnificent looking-glass.

She had sat very still, however, for a few minutes, for she was holding up a different earring for each ear, and intently observing the effect; being unable at once to decide if she would wear earrings of diamonds and turquoise, having the necklace on, belonging to that suite; or of diamonds only, having diamonds without turquoises in her hair. And Miss Parkes and Mrs. Benson also stood silent and spell-bound, also gazing at the two earrings. Only countrified Mary looked at Beatrice, till The Marchioness turned.

She turned and looked, not at her visitor's face, but at her hands (still thinking of the possible coral), and it was not till she perceived them utterly empty of any little bandbox or jewel-case, that she raised her eyes to Beatrice's, and said, "Well, Miss Brooke, how do you do, and what are you come about?" After which she resumed the silent study of the earrings, leaving Beatrice apparently to address any answer she had to make to the back of her corpulent white shoulders.

"I wish," said Beatrice, timidly, "I wish I might speak to you alone."

"You want me to send Benson away? Well, I am sure! What harm can Benson do you?" And again she scanned Beatrice, as if she thought the coral might be in her pocket or under her black silk mantilla. "But however, you may go, Benson, for a few minutes; and the girl may go. No, Miss Parkes, you need n't go; I *must* have somebody. You won't mind Parkes, I suppose? Nobody minds Parkes. Parkes can hold the jewel-cases; I never ask her to do anything menial; I did n't engage with her to do anything menial. I sometimes get her to hold the pincushion when I 'm dressing, but I do n't call pincushions menial. Now go on with whatever you have got to say, for the carriage will be round directly, and I must go the moment it is announced."

But Beatrice had broken down. While yet The Marchioness was insisting on the impossibility of doing without some one attendant, and explaining her opinion that pincushions were not "menial," Beatrice's imagination had wandered from the scene before her to the recollection of another ball,—the ball The Marchioness herself had given, and at which she had been present. The music, the voices, the sights of that night returned; she no

longer saw the glittering room, the stand-alone dress, the purple silk hangings. Her eyes

Were with her heart—and *that* was far away,—

far away with the Treherne of other days; smiling at her, dancing with her, leading her proudly in to supper, among the whispered complimentary observations of friends and acquaintances.

Her enforced calm melted into a gush of bitter tears; she sobbed aloud. Pale Miss Parkes trembled, with the unmenial jewel-case in her hand; the vainly exiled Benson stole to the intervening door, and stood listening with a severe countenance to a sound so unmeet in the boudoir of aristocratic life — Miss Brooke crying and shrieking like a "creature;" and little Mary turned away and wept for sympathy only with the sound of other weeping.

The Marchioness was startled; she was outraged; she was at once provoked and embarrassed; like all persons of very cold feelings in the presence of those who give way to violent emotion. She coloured visibly, even through her rouge (and was struck by it as a favourable effect in the mirror). She laid down the earring on the dressing-table,

and said petulantly, "I beg, whatever you have to say, Miss Brooke, you won't sit sobbing and shrieking there. Don't be so like a distressed governess, I beg! There is nothing I hate like this sort of thing; it is so very—so very vulgar! Pour yourself out a glass of water and drink it, and whatever you have to say, say it like a lady, and have done with it. I only hope (for the idea had crossed The Marchioness's mind that Beatrice might be come to ask aid from the wealthy for her father)—I only hope you are not here with any foolish idea that the Marquis or I could lend any money, or anything of that kind, because we can't; and as it is, I have only half an opera-box this season with Eudocia; and if I had the power, I can tell you I'd much rather give the very, *very* little I have to give, to anybody that came quietly and decently, than I would—"

Beatrice interrupted her; The Marchioness was always garrulous when she became angry, or, as she expressed it, "flurried," and it was difficult to stop her; but Beatrice said with the most icy composure, "I beg your pardon; it is only fatigue; I will not detain you a moment. I believe you

were at the central Desert Station on the way to Suez in the month of September last?"

"Well, I was," said the puzzled Marchioness; her recollection of Egypt and its beads coming back, with another confused glimpse of the coral she could not help imagining Beatrice was about to offer for sale. "I was—what then?'

"Did you meet," faltered Beatrice—"were you acquainted with—do you know if a clergyman, the chaplain of an English consulate, halted there at the same time?"

The Marchioness stared. "No; I am perfectly certain there was nobody of the kind; perfectly certain, because I had the greatest difficulty getting sufficient accommodation for our party; indeed, as it was, Parkes was obliged to sleep in Benson's room, and I believe the doctor slept in the Marquis's room. I am quite certain no chaplain, no Englishman was there; if there had been, naturally I should have insisted on having his room, because that would have given us one room more, and a man can sleep anywhere. Horrid place! horrid accommodation! There was but one room besides ours, and some girl was ill there of a fever—some improper person, I believe—

whom my nephew Montagu wanted assistance for. How came you to know—"

Suddenly the Marchioness stopped; she turned her glittering eyes and her glittering diamonds full upon Beatrice; she contemplated her as she sat there, pale, still, and defiant.

"*You* were the girl that was travelling with him!" she said.

No answer, no denial; the pale defiant face looked paler still, the eyes more wildly vague. Gentle Miss Parkes broke through all proper bounds of humble companionship, and flying to Beatrice's side, chafed her hands between her own little scraggy palms, saying meekly, "My dear, let me untie your bonnet; let me help you. My dear, can I not help you in some way?"

"Miss Parkes, are you mad, or are you in your Christian senses?" exclaimed the exasperated Marchioness. "Let this unhappy young woman go about her business; I suppose she and my nephew have had some dispute about what shall be done for her. *I* can't interfere! Most improper! She don't even deny that she was travelling with him as his mistress."

"I do deny it; I was travelling with him as his WIFE."

"I never heard such an impudent imposture in all my life! When we all know that Montagu is as good as engaged to one of the Wollinghams! I'm sure I can't wonder now, that Eudocia came and rated me in this very room,—in this very room,—on your account,—you monstrous, ungrateful creature! You! to make quarrels between sisters, indeed; you that go travelling with young men of family in all sorts of out-of-the-way places, giving one such a fright about infection as I never had before, and then pretending—there's the carriage! I heard the carriage stop! I shall be late as it is for the ball,—entirely through your fault, Miss Brooke! Where 's my fan? No, not that fan; the fan with feathers. Where 's my handkerchief? You 've put the wrong perfume upon it; I told you never to put *eau-de-mousseline* upon anything of mine. Get another. Miss Brooke, what are you waiting for? I must beg you will instantly leave this house. I don't know what you came to ask me to do in the matter; all I know is, that I can't interfere. As you 've brewed, so you must bake: that 's the proverb. And your boldness in

venturing to come to any of Montagu's relations! but to be sure, Montagu is so reckless and wilful, he was sure to be taken in by some one. Where is my shawl? Have you lost your senses, Miss Parkes? Benson! Benson, will you come and help me on with my shawl—if anyone still has their senses about them?"

Benson came in, and Beatrice tottered out; she felt wonderfully ill and bewildered, as if she scarce knew where she stood; but she was conscious that poor Miss Parkes had followed her outside the door, on to the flossy white rug. They made a moment's halt there.

"Let me call you a cab, my dear," said the pitying Miss Parkes. "I don't mind the least; I don't even want a bonnet. See, I 'll tie this handkerchief over my head. If you will wait till the Marchioness is gone, I 'll go home with you; do let me."

But Beatrice shook her head faintly, and said she was going only a few steps—going to a friend "close by;" and the imperious voice of the Marchioness, authoritatively calling her humble companion back, to do something "not menial," put a stop to the colloquy.

The house door was already open. The footmen were standing in their state liveries and gold-headed canes, waiting to usher their lady into the state carriage, with its state hammercloth and wigged coachman. All was gorgeous colour flaring under the lamps, and Beatrice passed between them like a dark shadow, and glided slowly and wearily back, to leave a letter for Treherne in the Venetian casket. After which, the most noble the Marchioness of Updown got into the state carriage and went to the ball, to meet her most gracious Majesty and the two foreign sovereigns, and the new ambassador, and the other ambassadors, and dukes, and duchesses, and lords and ladies innumerable, being in fact the élite of the nobility, as was announced next day in all the papers.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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